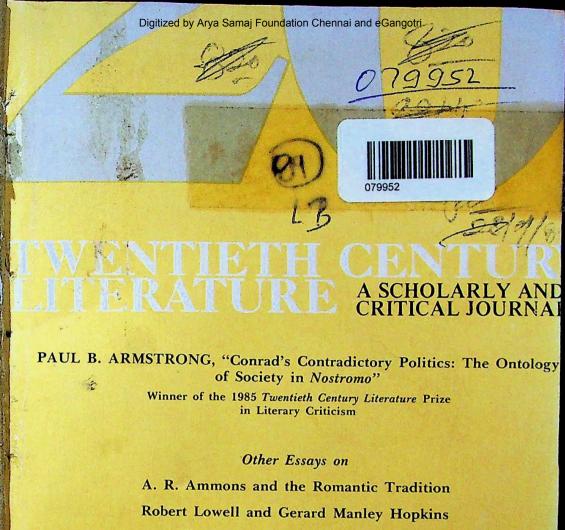


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The Language of Postmodernism

Barbara Pym and Jane Austen

The Plays of T. S. Eliot

William Carlos Williams and Charles Ives

VOLUME 31

SPRING 1985

NUMBER

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Twentieth Century Literature

A SCHOLARLY AND CRITICAL JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Photograph of Joseph Conrad courtesy of Special Collections, Hofstra University Library.

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Cover photograph: E. M. Forster in his room at King's College, Cambridge. (Courtesy of May Buckingham, Bill Foster)

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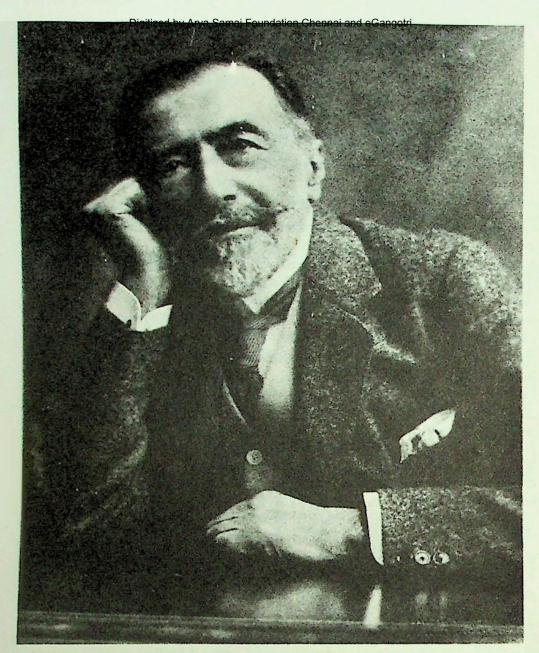
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We feel fraternal loss in the passing of Maurice Beebe, professor of English at Temple University and gifted founder/editor of *The Journal of Modern Literature*. Our ranks are seriously diminished by the death of so able and discriminating an editor and so friendly and helpful a colleague.

The Twentieth Century Literature Prize in Literary Criticism

The spring of 1985 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Hofstra University and the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the university's literary journal Twentieth Century Literature. We are pleased to celebrate these two events by awarding in this issue of the journal the first annual TCL Prize in Literary Criticism. The prize, to be given each year to the author of that essay submitted to the journal in the preceding year which is judged to make the "most impressive contribution to our understanding and appreciation of the literature of this century," serves as a fitting way to commemorate both Hofstra's commitment to academic excellence and the three decades of contribution the university's scholarly journal has made to literary studies. The prize includes publication as the lead article of our spring issue each year and a cash award of \$500.

This year's winner is Paul B. Armstrong, Associate Professor of English at Georgia Institute of Technology, for his essay, "Conrad's Contradictory Politics: The Ontology of Society in Nostromo." Frank Kermode, who served as judge for this year's contest, chose the winning essay from among a half dozen finalists nominated jointly by the editors of TCL and members of the journal's editorial board. In explaining his choice, Kermode wrote: "Armstrong has intelligently read a remarkable novel, identified some of its major cruces, and expounded them with verve, skill and civility. His comments on other critics are polite but pointed, and his essay complies with the basic responsibilities of criticism as implied in the terms of the TCL Prize."



Josef Leador Homad Kongemunickin

The Old Farmhouse.

June 21 1/1927

Conrad's Contradictory Politics: The Ontology of Society in Nostromo

Winner of the 1985 TCL Prize in Literary Criticism

PAUL B. ARMSTRONG

Joseph Conrad's politics are deeply contradictory. He is radical and even anarchistic in his skepticism about the justification which any social constitution can claim. But he is conservative in his belief in the need to preserve conventions and institutions because without them we would be lost. Conrad may hope for "the advent of Concord and Justice," but he can also write: "the efforts of mankind to work its own salvation present a sight of alarming comicality." He may seem revolutionary in his devastating critiques of imperialism and capitalism, but he has the doubts of a reactionary about the efficacy of revolutions and the motives of their advocates. His attack on autocracy suggests a democratic, egalitarian temperament, but his contempt for the complacency and gullibility of mankind shows little faith in the ability of the community to govern itself wisely. It would seem justified to conclude, as one critic recently has, that all of these sides of Conrad "cannot add up to a fully coherent political rationale."

There is indeed a logic, however, to Conrad's political contradictions. In order to discover it, we must move to the level of ontology and disclose the metaphysical oppositions responsible for them. Like the rest of his works, Conrad's political novels are a sustained meditation on the meaning and significance of contingency. The notion of "contingency" has many dimensions for Conrad: chance, impermanence, the lack of absolute necessity to the ways and shapes of the world, the insubstantiality of human constructs, the absence of transcendental foundations. Conrad's attitude toward contingency makes him a novelist of contradictions. His fictional universe is characterized by a ceaseless (and potentially unstoppable) oscillation between an intense desire to overcome contingency and an equally compelling recognition that this can never be accomplished.

For example, Conrad is a monist in his wish to discover a single truth which would transcend the variability of the realm of meanings and provide them with a stabilizing, unifying origin. But his pursuit of monism ever turns up new proof of the world's irreducible pluralism. His oft-quoted "Preface" to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus*" describes art's goal as the conquest of the accidental and inessential in life through the discovery of the necessary and the absolute:

art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colours, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter, and in the facts of life what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential—their one illuminating and convincing quality—the very truth of their existence.⁴

This quest for essences suggests the temperament of a monist for whom truth is ultimately single, the transcendental signified beneath the multiplicity of signifiers which both disguise and reveal it. But this crucial passage also betrays the sensibility of a pluralist. Conrad not only calls truth "manifold" as well as "one." He also refrains from claiming that the series of essences disclosed by art will eventually synthesize into a single "Truth." More subtly but even more tellingly, his lengthy list of plurals at the beginning of the second sentence ("forms," "colours," "shadows," and so on) insistently asserts the world's inherent multiplicity and thereby implicitly undercuts the plea for oneness with which the sentence ends (itself a listing of several elements). If Conrad does discover a final truth, this is the ubiquity of nothingness. But once again monism leads to pluralism because a multiplicity of meanings ensues from the absence of a ground which might limit or unite them.

Inasmuch as Conrad's ontology is contradictory, it is only a beginning to say that "Man is a political animal for Conrad as much as for Plato and Aristotle." Political theorists have erected diametrically opposite philosophies on the postulate that man is primarily a social being. The problem is to determine what kind of being this makes man, and here Conrad's critics have varied so widely as to associate him with the conservative Burke and the revolutionary Rousseau. The Burke connection deserves a little attention here both because it is so well known and because it exemplifies many of the difficulties of defining Conrad's politics.

Avrom Fleishman argues that Conrad's "awareness of the priority

of the social unit to the individual self . . . places [him] squarely within the organicist tradition"—the "Burke tradition." This claim seems especially plausible because of Conrad's well-known, ardent advocacy of the value of fidelity—"the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts." Granting priority to society is not in itself, however, sufficient reason to align Conrad with the heritage of parliamentary conservatism. Hardly a descendant of Burke, for example, Marx also holds the community higher than the individual and argues that the self finds its fullest expression in social life.

Conrad actually stands equally distant from both Marx and Burke. Unable to share Marx's faith that the abolition of economic inequities will make social harmony possible, Conrad fears that ineradicable differences must threaten any form of community. As we shall see, he regards the insistent longing of the self to overcome its limits as a potential source of violence regardless of the conditions of production, ownership, and exchange. Hence his claim: "Socialism must inevitably end in Caesarism."10 But this same wariness of the tendency of authority to expand and abuse its power prevents Conrad from sharing Burke's faith in parliamentary institutions and legal customs as guarantors of social peace and individual freedom. Conrad warns that absolutism "is inherent in every form of government" and that "Every form of legality is bound to degenerate into oppression" ("Autocracy and War," p. 101). Once again contradictory for logically consistent reasons. Conrad wishes for a fully harmonious community as much as Marx and the organicists do; but the intensity of his desire for perfect, all-encompassing fidelity reflects his awareness of the intractable isolation of the self-an isolation which he regards as more of an obstacle to concord than they do and more a potential cause of antagonism.

I propose to explicate the logic of Conrad's political contradictions by analyzing the depiction of society in *Nostromo*, his most ambitious political novel. *Nostromo* offers a model of the being of society. Its approach to society is more ontological than ontic.¹¹ This innovative work is not so much a realistic representation of a given historical situation as a paradigm of political processes—a model through which Conrad explores the ontology of the social world. Conrad dramatizes Costaguana with considerable concrete particularity, so much so that *Nostromo* has been acclaimed for its revelations about the political dilemmas of Latin America. But the novel's ultimate ambition is not to offer general observations about the Caribbean. Although Costaguana

may seem true to Latin American conditions, it is all the time not-real, purely imagined. It simultaneously invokes and refuses a claim to realism. But this paradoxical combination of particularity and unreality is precisely what a model entails.

In this respect *Nostromo* differs slightly but importantly from *Middlemarch*, a novel to which it is frequently compared. Calling Eliot's realism "synecdochic," J. Hillis Miller notes that "in *Middlemarch* a fragment" of English society "is examined as a 'sample' of the larger whole of which it is a part." Costaguana is not a part which stands for the whole—a segment related by a syntagmatic chain to the totality to which it belongs. It is itself a whole society. It is a paradigm which stands for the being of society and exemplifies its contradictions. This difference between Eliot's syntagmatic and Conrad's paradigmatic strategies of representation reflects a larger historical shift in the novel's generic emphasis from constructing realistic worlds to laying bare the principles of world-construction.

The revolutionary situation in Costaguana casts into bold relief three of the basic dimensions of the social world—power, community, and change. These are the key components of politics, society, and history. Power, community, and change are terms for describing how the members of any group seek control over each other, join or oppose each other, and alter their relations among themselves and to their situation. The grabs for power by Montero and Sotillo as well as the many conflicts among the major interests in Sulaco raise first questions about politics: What gives rise to conflicts over power? Can its disruptive force be defeated and harnessed for constructive ends? The disturbance to the social order, the clash between the ambitions of the various parties, and the hope that a separate state might guarantee peace and justice—all of these bring to the foreground the question of whether and how a unified community might be molded out of a multiplicity of factions.

Because Sulaco is a caldron of actual and potential changes, history emerges as a living process. Questions about the workings of historical time acquire a special urgency: What are the causes and consequences of change? Is it determined, accidental, or subject to human will? As a paradigm of social processes, Costaguana is not an allegory where correspondences can be found between its various elements and the issues they stand for. Rather, it is a model defined by a set of constraints and a number of variables which Conrad manipulates in order to explore questions about the being of society. The model of Cos-

taguana is a special, extreme case with unusual revelatory value precisely because of its extremity.

The first step in the establishment of a society—and in the creation of Conrad's model—is the separation of culture from nature. The rendering of the immense darkness of the Placid Gulf in the opening chapter of the novel introduces nature as the mute, indifferent background to the doings of man: "Sky, land, and sea disappear together out of the world when the Placido—as the saying is—goes to sleep under its black poncho."13 The primordial state of nature is, Nostromo suggests, a condition of absolute non-differentiation.¹⁴ By deploying a network of distinctions, society may seek to transform and control nature-but can never fully master it. At most culture can invent myths, metaphors, or personifications (the gulf asleep under its poncho) which divide and structure linguistically what cannot be more effectively controlled. As the expansion of the mine transforms the plantation society and brings the railroad and the telegraph, the story of Costaguana's development is the increasing establishment of differences to measure time and space, govern and chronicle resources, and distribute cultural features over the natural landscape.

Differences do exist in nature, of course, but Conrad's novel suggests that they only take on positive significance when human purposes give them meaning—finding in them an inspiration for man's projects, as when Decoud cries: "Look at the mountains! Nature itself seems to cry to us, 'Separate!' " (p. 184), or an obstacle to his plans, as in the complaint of the railway's chief engineer: "We can't move mountains!" (p. 41). Nature's pre-given differentiating structures can be constituted in a variety of ways, and this multiplicity suggests that the meaning of the natural world is a matter of interpretation. We have here one of the novel's first ontological contradictions. The paradox of nature in *Nostromo* is that is transcends man and defies assimilation but that it is also a social construct and a hermeneutic variable. Nature is simultaneously beyond the contingency of cultural variation and beholden to it for its meaning.¹⁵

The central symbol in the novel exemplifies Conrad's contradictory understanding of the relation between culture and nature. Much of the mystery and fascination which surround the silver of the San Tomé mine is due to the ambiguous position it occupies between the two realms. It is a natural resource, obviously, and its seeming inexhaustibility suggests not only potentially infinite power and wealth for the owner of the mine but also the boundless extension of nature beyond

the limits of the human world. Its extraction is a highly organized cultural activity, however, and its value is social. Although the silver is called "incorruptible" because it seems to have an inherent purity and power which transcend Costaguana's political machinations, its worth ultimately derives from a convention—the agreement to consider certain metals precious because of their scarcity and to use them as a medium of exchange. Silver seems to carry its value deep within it, inalienable and everlasting, but what its possessor owns is the desire of others to have what he has. Conrad's novel portrays the value of the silver as paradoxically both naturally immanent and culturally contingent.

Although a product of nature, silver also has the status of a sign. Single itself, silver's capacity for representation is infinitely variable. The silver in Nostromo thus participates in Conrad's reflections not only about contingency but also about monism and pluralism. When Mrs. Gould "laid her unmercenary hands, with an eagerness that made them tremble, upon the first silver ingot turned out still warm from the mould," she feels "as though it were not a mere fact, but something far-reaching and impalpable, like the true expression of an emotion or the emergence of a principle" (p. 107). Mrs. Gould's attitude owes much, of course, to her husband, for whom the silver means many things: a triumph where his father had failed, a proof of his competence, a defiance of the corruption and disorder in the surrounding land, a fulfillment of his pact with his backer Holroyd. To the reformers the silver stands for the possibility of progress, prosperity, peace, stability, and justice. To government officials it means a steady, guaranteed income of bribes. To the self-seeking leaders of insurrections it makes the mine a prime object of their quest for power. To the various foreign interests the silver is a guarantee that their investments will be safe. To Holroyd it stands for an opportunity to control a man and to extend the reach of his Protestant sect. Subject to an ever-expanding variety of interpretations, the silver is the origin of a potentially endless series of signifiers—but a particularly mysterious, fascinating origin because it seems to begin deep within the earth, in the bowels of nature.

The many competing meanings which the silver takes on are an indication that, on Conrad's view, differentiation is not only potentially stabilizing but also potentially destabilizing. Differentiation is necessary for the creation, extension, and refinement of the structures which make up a society. But by interrupting the silent permanence of nature, differentiation also introduces change, multiplicity, and the arbi-

trariness of cultural conventions. The silver itself may be single and enduring, but its place in men's purposes and interests is many and various. This instability can and of course does lead to conflict when meanings and goals clash to the exclusion of each other. The problem of power is thus inherent in the very constitution of culture as a differentiated entity. *Nostromo* suggests that the beginning of culture is also the beginning of politics.

The double-sidedness of differentiation—tool for organizing and managing the world, origin of conflict and battles for power—is one of Nostromo's central political themes. It finds expression, for example, in the seemingly endless alternation in Costaguana between the establishment of structures of power and their dissolution with the rise of a competing faction. The reformers who desire stability and justice want the benefits of differentiation without the disruptions and strife to which it can also lead. But Conrad doubts that these can be separated. Temporary alliances between groups with compatible interests seem possible, but the differences smoothed over or ignored by any alliance ultimately assert their force. As many readers have noticed, for example, the interests of the foreign elements no longer seem as conducive to the welfare of the native population at the end of the novel as they did at the outset. And, of course, some sets of interests are irremediably antagonistic. Decoud wonders why the rebellious Montero had not been "bought off," for example, but then realizes that the scoundrel "wanted the whole lot" (p. 183)-an assertion of radical self-interest which refuses compromise.

Parliamentary democracy may seek to adjudicate between competing needs and desires within an institutional structure and to regulate disagreements instead of allowing them to tear the social fabric apart. But the tumultuous history of Costaguana suggests that democracy is no stronger than the agreement of all participants to obey self-generated rules (or than their ability to enforce compliance). Conrad may be a democrat in his belief that parliamentary negotiation is the safest, fairest way to control and distribute power. But this conviction is menaced by the recognition that such negotiation is always vulnerable to autocratic claims. As much as those who aspire to make democracy work in Costaguana deserve admiration, their ultimate weakness is unmasked by Decoud's skepticism: "Empty speeches. . . . Hiding their fears behind imbecile hopes" (p. 238). Nostromo is both an endorsement and a demystification of democracy. And this contradiction is a reflection of a basic paradox of power and differentiation namely, that although both are necessary to found and preserve a

structure, this stabilizing function is constantly accompanied by the threat of an eruption of violence itself sparked by differences.

The anatomy of power in Nostromo suggests that disruptive assertions of the will are attributable to man's inherent condition of deficiency. Man's inability to master his destiny or to achieve wholeness creates a volatile potential for demonstrations of power intended to conquer limits or remedy insufficiencies. All of the tyrants in Nostromo seize and abuse power to compensate for wounds to their narcissism. The earliest indication that Montero may plot an insurrection comes at the ceremony in Sulaco where he feels insulted and neglected: "why was it that nobody was looking at him? he wondered to himself angrily" (p. 119). If Montero rebels to gain center stage, then Guzman Bento justifies his tyranny with an even more exaggerated sense of selfimportance; indeed, the Almighty is "the only power [Bento] was at all disposed to recognize as above himself" (p. 139). Lacking God's perfection and self-confidence, however, Bento resorts to capricious assertions of will to convince himself of his ascendancy. A pettier tyrant, Sotillo is similarly an egotist, even if his vision is more limited (itself an ironic comment on his deficiencies—even his vanity is small-minded). Sotillo is depicted as "childish in [his] rapacity" because he "was fond of jewels, gold trinkets, of personal adornment" in contrast to "the misty idealism" of those "who at the smallest encouragement dream of nothing less than the conquest of the earth" (pp. 333-34).

Whether large or small in its ambitions, however, the kind of desire which Conrad associates with a wanton will to power is a wish to enhance the prestige and dominion of the self in defiance of the constraints which signal man's finitude. This is an impossible, self-contradictory project, however. Everything a Sotillo acquires not only expands his powers but also points out their limits because something still exceeds his grasp. A desire to conquer the whole earth is the logical final stage for the voracious appetite of the will—or perhaps not the last, since possession even of the entire planet would still leave the tyrant's power incomplete.

Conrad clearly admires the constructive use of power—man's mastery of circumstances which seem to defy his resources (such as the whims of the sea), or the careful channeling of force which a job well done demands. On both counts Gould's achievement in transforming the mine from a "paradise of snakes" (p. 105) into a productive social structure gives him heroic stature. But Gould also seems increasingly demonic 2s his devotion to the mine becomes fanatical. His extremism shows the tendency of power to overreach itself. The two sides of

Gould's character as both hero and demon reflect Conrad's sense of the contradiction between power's uses and its inherent inclination to abuse.

Gould is described at one point as "a just man and a powerful one" (p. 357). One of the questions which Nostromo raises, however, is whether justice and power are compatible—whether a sense of equity and compassion can successfully curb power, or whether the force required to impose any legal standard must invariably undermine its pretensions. At the end of the novel, as has often been observed, the Sulacan elite who were originally aligned with justice against the tyranny of Costaguana's perpetual misrule are beginning to seem oppressive themselves. Nostromo suggests, furthermore, that "justice" is not a univocal category but a variable notion which can be construed in many different ways. The justice of restitution which Father Corbelan seeks seems unjust, for example, to the owners of former Church property. The justice of repaid debts which the foreign interests desire seems unfair to much of the native population. The justice Nostromo feels he is denied seems amply paid to him in the eyes of his employers. And so on ad infinitum. Instead of providing an unequivocal norm to restrain the abuse of power, the idea of "justice" is an essentially contested category. It can itself spawn battles for ascendancy when competing interests struggle to make their interpretation of its meaning prevail. Demonstrating the importance of justice but at the same time demystifying its claims, Conrad once again adopts contradictory political attitudes for internally coherent reasons. He casts doubt on the utility and univocity of "justice" as a political norm precisely because of his awareness that power resists restraints like "justice" as much as it requires them.

The contradictions in Conrad's attitude toward power are echoed and reinforced by the many contradictions which pervade the novel's attitude toward its own narrative authority. As a narrative, *Nostromo* is both a stable and an unstable structure—as if Conrad were asserting his power as an author but at the same time withdrawing or contesting it. The result is to make power and authority into issues in the reader's relation with the text as much as they are in the story itself. Consider, for example, the novel's alternation between a limited first-person and an ominiscient third-person—an "I" whose authority derives from his acquaintance with those on the scene, and an anonymous vision which can see into Decoud's and Nostromo's minds when they are alone. The first-person's implicit acknowledgment of the limits of epistemological power contests the third-person's invocation of the prerogative to know

all—but the third-person in turn questions the first-person's claim to superior authenticity by demonstrating that it is simply one narrative convention among others.

Power is similarly invoked only to be questioned within the firstperson narrative itself. The "I" is an authoritative speaker, and not a Marlow whose reliability we must question or who doubts his own understanding of his story. But the very claim of privileged knowledge which this "I" makes in the "Preface" becomes increasingly questionable as the novel proceeds and we learn that "my venerated friend, the late Don José Avellanos" and "his impartial and eloquent 'History of Fifty Years of Misrule' "-the narrator's "principal authority for the history of Costaguana" (p. xviii)—are nothing more than fictional creations. Instead of grounding the narrative, they turn out to be imaginary constructs. Hardly a neutral observer, furthermore, Don José is indeed partial in his perspective because of his passionate patriotism. Once again Conrad employs a contradictory narrative strategy whereby he introduces a claim of authority only to call attention to its limits and cast doubts on its pretensions. This double movement suggests that an act of power is necessary to make meaning but that any assertion of ascendancy-even mastery over the elements of a story-is possibly suspect and vain. In the semantic realm as in the world of politics, Conrad acknowledges the usefulness of power to establish structures and pursue productive ends-at the same time as he warns against egotistical self-assertion and deceptive manipulation.

Conrad's two-sided attitude toward power is closely linked to his contradictory attitude toward community. Nostromo alternates between endorsing and demystifying the ideal of community-between advocating social oneness and demonstrating its impossibility. This is perhaps best illustrated by the novel's extensive exploration of the process of mediation. For all of its struggles and strifes, Sulaco abounds in mediators-institutions like the church and the mine, or leaders like Gould, Don José, Nostromo, and even Mrs. Gould. The San Tomé mine is a paradigm of social mediation: "the emblem of a common cause," it "was to become an institution, a rallying point for everything ... that needed order and stability to live" (pp. 260, 110). The mine demonstrates how a mediator provides an external point of focus onto which otherwise separate selves can project shared values, needs, or desires. But there are consequently as many different kinds of mediators as there are interests and convictions—spiritual mediators like the ever-recurring Madonna in blue robes, or material ones like the mine and the railway (demigods of capitalistic expansion). Mediators

may embody such diverse values as self-sacrificing care (Mrs. Gould and her sister-spirit the Madonna), peace through democracy (Don José), pragmatic welfare through economic power (Charles Gould), or heroic honor (Nostromo). Mediators may unify segments of society, then, but Conrad's social model suggests that many different, sometimes incompatible mediating structures may coexist in the same community. Mediation is consequently both an aid and an obstacle to social cohesion.

For these reasons, mediation does not eradicate a society's antagonisms and can even exacerbate them. The silver is the most powerful and pervasive mediator in the novel, for example, precisely because it can take on so many meanings. Since these meanings frequently conflict, however, the silver's ability to inspire allegiances is equaled only by its capacity to spark violent dissension. To the extent that mediation is a pluralistic social function which unifies a community at most provisionally and incompletely, there is no real contradiction between Sulaco's abundance of mediators and its history of conflict.

Although its aim is monistic, mediation in Nostromo is inherently pluralistic because it is based on belief. The potential diversity of belief knows no bounds. Gould and Nostromo are powerful mediators because both have an uncanny ability to inspire the confidence of others. "Charles Gould believed in the mine" and, "in his unshaken assurance, was absolutely convincing"; "His faith . . . was contagious, though it was not served by a great eloquence" (p. 75). The capataz de cargadores is similarly reticent and similarly able for that very reason to inspire others to believe in his limitless ability. With both of these silent mediators, their very opacity seems to enhance their receptivity as screens onto which others can project meanings. Reticence allows a mediator to acquire conflicting values. Nostromo is a romantic hero to the natives, for example, but the pragmatic capitalists regard him as a handy fellow for a tough job. Gould similarly acquires different, not precisely equivalent meanings for Sulaco's democratic reformers and the foreign investors. Although language might seem to provide a tool for advancing harmony by making mutual understanding possible, silence is a more effective means of establishing community in Nostromo because unity is better served by suppressing differences than by exchanging messages which would expose and increase them.

The opacity of the mediator suggests that differences remain between selves even when communal structures bring them together. There is the distance, first, between the mediator and the rest of the community. Gould's inscrutable anonymity isolates him from his closest allies and even, increasingly, from his wife. There is also a residual distance, secondly, between those who share the same mediator. Even when they value it similarly, their shared estimation of a common object manipulates but does not eliminate the gaps between selves. Triangulation of this kind preserves the distance between its poles even as it unifies them as parts of one structure.

The limits of mediation in *Nostromo* call into question the dream of "organic community." The term "organic" implies that a unified community is somehow natural, justified by its own intrinsic harmony. But the many shifting modes of mediation in *Nostromo* portray community as an artificial, cultural creation. Even to the end of the novel, any alignment of members in a group is provisional and contingent, subject to sudden and violent change. No group is inherently justified, Conrad's novel suggests, because the beliefs and interests which unify it are always in competition or often uneasy cooperation with opposing but perhaps equally legitimate views.

The experience of reading Nostromo reenacts many of the contradictions that Conrad seeks to exemplify in his model of community. In fitting together related elements scattered across the time of narration, across the perspectives of different characters, and across different locations where events unfold simultaneously, the novel's readers must emulate Conrad's own work of constructing an entire society.17 But they discover in the process that the social whole is an irreducible multiplicity. Only the reader has a perspective encompassing enough to achieve a holistic vision of the novel's society—a total picture not accessible to any single participant or available at any given moment. But the reader's quest for consistency is blocked by the very multiplicity which sets the quest in motion and which it seeks to synthesize. This multiplicity refuses to coalesce to the extent that Sulaco has many histories and not a single "History." The implication of the blockage is that any social phenomenon is pluralistic—an incompletely unified collection of sometimes converging but always also conflicting interests, ambitions, and experiences.

To take a single example: Decoud's suicide, Dr. Monygham's desperate deception of Sotillo, and Nostromo's famous ride to Barrios are simultaneous events which are complexly interrelated. As the reader compares and contrasts the perspectives of these three characters at this moment in history, he should receive a sense of the relatedness of individual experiences through their participation in a social network. But the many divergences in what the moment means to this lonely skeptic, the disillusioned but noble doctor, and the betrayed *capataz*

insist on the irreducible distinctness of their worlds. None of them understand or feel the moment in the same way. Their worlds are related but mutually opaque. The reader's challenge is to acknowledge the integrity and irreducibility of the many modes of vision offered by Nostromo's universe while seeing through and across them at the same time to compose the community entire. The contradictory task of reading Nostromo is to do justice both to the multiplicity of society and to the links, overlaps, and parallels which join different perspectives together as participants in a shared history.

Battles over power and conflicts within the community are central to the course of history. It is not surprising, then, that the contradictions in Conrad's understanding of power and community are paralleled by contradictions in his interpretation of the causes and consequences of social change. Conrad describes himself as a determinist, but his political fictions deny that there is any inevitability to historical developments. He is an advocate of incisive human action, but he has no faith in the ability of the will to control the destiny of either the individual or the group. Both determinism and freedom are overruled in Conrad's universe by the abiding force of contingency—the ubiquitous contingency which also shows itself in the volatility of power and in the multiplicity which prevents social unity.

The temperament of the determinist dominates Conrad's wellknown metaphor which depicts human history as a demonic knittingmachine that refuses any alterations in its purpose or design. This image captures his conviction that man is not essential to the world, but it is also misleading because it implies that the order of things is more necessary and less arbitrary than his fictions suggest. Contrary to his deterministic inclinations (but similarly a reflection of his sense of man's littleness), Conrad is too keenly appreciative of the ever-present possibility that some arbitrary chance will intervene for him to consider any course of events fated or guaranteed.18 The rebellion in Sulaco could have any one of several possible outcomes, for example. Which one will prevail depends on such contingencies as the amazing accident of the collision in the Gulf and on the equally incalculable actions of men, whether foolish or heroic. (Who could have predicted that Hirsch would seek refuge on the lighter, or that Dr. Monygham could hold Sotillo at bay for so long?)

Agency is as contradictory a matter for Conrad as fatality. Dr. Monygham's desperate game with Sotillo and Nostromo's ride for Barrios are instances where human will changes or directs the course of events. Chance prevails, however, even when the will succeeds. Good

fortune alone saves Monygham from Sotillo's noose or a stray bullet during Barrios' attack, and any one of a number of unlucky occurrences could have halted Nostromo's miraculous ride. Many characters in the novel, both villains and heroes, could be described with these words which summarize Sotillo's career: "Nothing he had planned had come to pass" (p. 440). Even the powerful Gould must make constant revisions in his designs to accommodate uncontrollable contingencies. Decoud's memorial in the cathedral credits his authorship of the separate Sulacan republic, but this is also ironic because very little happened as he intended. Human ambitions are always vulnerable in *Nostromo*—as they are throughout Conrad's canon—to the emergence of the unexpected, arbitrary chance.¹⁹

Because he doubts that change can be either predicted or controlled, Conrad is ambivalent about both evolution and revolution as vehicles of social improvement. He claims that "the word Evolution . . . is precisely the expression of the highest intellectual hope," where "Revolution" is "a word of dread as much as hope" ("Autocracy and War," p. 99). And the narrator of Under Western Eyes argues that "in a real revolution the best characters do not come to the front. . . . Hopes grotesquely betrayed, ideals caricatured—that is the definition of revolutionary success."20 The revolutionary who presses Nostromo for money on his deathbed is in keeping with Conrad's prejudices: "small, frail, bloodthirsty . . . shock-headed, wildly hairy, like a hunchbacked monkey" (p. 562). Despite this abusive caricature, however, Conrad's novel ironically but importantly undercuts the hope of evolutionary change and instead portrays revolutionary action as a more effective route to social betterment. The evolutionary model fails disastrously and ingloriously with the collapse of the five-year transitional dictatorship of President Ribiera. The subsequent revolution of the Sulacan separatists produces peace and prosperity more quickly, completely, and securely than the gradualist scheme could have done.

Conrad may prefer evolutionary change, since gradual transitions from one state of the system to an only slightly different structure hold the play of chance to a minimum and maximize the likelihood that human control might prevail. Revolutionary change may worry him because it opens up room for chance—increasing the uncertainty and unpredictability of events, and exacerbating the ever-present danger that contingency will thwart man's designs. But some accidents can be happy—like the lucky but unexpected turn of events which gives rise to the scheme for a separate republic. And so, although Conrad is for the

most part dubious about revolutions, he cannot disallow the possibility that radical social change might serve the common good.

The contradictions in Conrad's attitude toward change are recapitulated by paradoxes in the temporal structure of his novel. Conrad manipulates narrative time in *Nostromo* so as to transform the experience of reading into a kind of simulation of the vicissitudes of historical happening. As many readers have noted, the novel shifts forward and back in time so often and so abruptly that it is difficult to keep track of the narrative present or to maintain a clear idea of the novel's chronology.²¹ One effect of these time-shifts is to convey a feeling of unpredictability. We never know when the narrative will change course or where it will go next. Because of the power of chance, unpredictability is for Conrad an essential feature of historical time. The time-shifts re-create the uncertainties of chance in the experience of reading.

Paradoxically, however, the narrative is only able to jump around as freely as it does because the events it portrays are assumed to be fixed and past. They are synchronic, simultaneous with each other to the extent that they are all equally available to the scrutiny of the present in any order the narrator pleases. Synchrony makes it possible for Conrad to disrupt the time-line of his story. In another turn of the screw, however, it thereby allows him to call attention to diachrony. To the extent that the novel's shifts seem unpredictable, the outcome and significance of the events it portrays still seem undecided and uncertain to the reader even though everything is already determined (the past cannot be changed, and we are even told early on that the separatist rebellion succeeds). The uncertainties at the level of the telling also destabilize our sense of the event told. Nostromo consequently gives the reader more of a feeling that events are happening-still in flux, their ultimate meaning not yet settled—than it might if it obeyed the consecutive temporality of narrative coherence. Although step-by-step narration is diachronic because it is sequential, its relation of events operates according to the principle of the more or less progressive reduction of contingency. The goal is a final order where everything fits together. But if consecutive narration proceeds diachronically toward the goal of synchrony, Nostromo exploits synchrony to accentuate diachrony.

The time-shifts in *Nostromo* also dramatize that historical meaning is a teleological process. From the baffling scene in Chapter 2 where Señor Ribiera enters Sulaco on a lame mule which expires under him,

the reader should realize that this is a novel which will demand unusually strenuous anticipatory and retrospective connections. Ribiera's ignominious arrival is the telos of many earlier happenings which are necessary to explain it even as it endows them with their culminating significance. It is the answer to a question which the reader does not yet have. By giving the answer first and only later filling in the question, Conrad calls attention to the extent to which the meaning of history is discovered in the future. Any particular moment in history attains its significance when the potentialities within it have been selected from and completed (and inasmuch as this process is never finished, its meaning always remains open to change). By making the reader wonder about what led up to a baffling event, Nostromo reverses the course of historical happening in order to emphasize how moments which come before achieve their meaning through moments which come after. The first presentation of the culminating moment makes little sense all by itself precisely because it is the final link which takes its meaning from and gives meaning to the chain of moments preceding it.

Although the meaning of any historical moment is teleological, Conrad does not believe that history is necessarily progressive.²² The paradigm of Costaguana suggests that the same ontological conflicts and contradictions plague every social arrangement because they defy definitive resolution or lasting amelioration. The end of Nostromo is a distant repetition of earlier stages in the development of the San Tomé mine. This suggests that history is essentially cyclical, a perpetual repetition and return of intractable dilemmas in different forms. Like their predecessors many years before Gould's father was given the mine, the workers may rise up against their foreign masters. And even though Sulaco has declared independence from Costaguana to create peace and stability for itself, its leaders are now plotting to annex the remainder of the country in yet another civil war. The balance of power is coming undone, both internally and externally. As always in Conrad's fictional universe, power tends toward instability whenever it seems to have stabilized. The promise that peace could lead to communal harmony has been disappointed because the interests of various parties still clash (workers and owners, church and state, foreign investors and domestic circles). The quest for "Concord and Justice" seems not to lead toward a triumphant conclusion. Rather, it results in a series of displacements which approach their goal only to see it recede because the ontology of power and community makes its realization impossible.

This is a bleak conservatism, but it also leads Conrad to make a

radical critique of his contemporary social world. Conrad especially distrusts capitalism because it exacerbates political and social dilemmas which threaten any and all ways of organizing a community. He claims in "Autocracy and War" that "democracy, which has elected to pin its faith to the supremacy of material interests, will have to fight their battles to the bitter end, on a mere pittance. . . . The true peace of the world . . . will be built on less perishable foundations than those of material interests" (p. 107). The instabilities inherent in the conflicts of the marketplace and in the pursuit of self-advantage make the seeming solidity of the material interests an ironically unsteady, insubstantial basis on which to build the social order. Expressing similar sentiments, Dr. Monygham calls instead for a society based on "the continuity and the force that can be found only in a moral principle" (p. 511).

What would this principle be, however, and how could it justify itself? Although seemingly insubstantial, it might be said to draw strength from the allegiance it inspires. But the multiplicity of incompatible perspectives, interests, and values in the world *Nostromo* dramatizes casts doubt on the likelihood that an entire community could ever agree on a single, coherent set of beliefs. Although the hope that convictions may be held in common is the basis for any prospect of social harmony, the paradigm of Costaguana also suggests that one of the primary obstacles to a unified community is the volatility of belief, its tendency to proliferate in a variety of incompatible creeds. Once again Conrad's desire for monism only reinforces his recognition of pluralism.

Nostromo is wary that any declaration of faith may harbor a mystification-a danger particularly marked, it would seem, with political pronouncements. Charles Gould complains: "The words one knows so well have a nightmarish meaning in this country. Liberty, democracy, patriotism, government-all of them have a flavour of folly and murder" (p. 408). A hermeneutics of unmasking is required to uncover the deceptions of political rhetoric—a hermeneutics which understands the meaning of any state of affairs as something other than what it pretends. But Nostromo also depicts silence and disengagement as ineffective responses to the danger that political affirmations may deceive. Despite "his fear of empty loquacity" (p. 368), for example, Gould must eventually make his voice heard in Sulacan politics, and Decoud must publish rhetorical exaggerations in order to pursue values he hopes will redeem him from despair. Suspicion alone is incomplete. It can unmask the lie in an affirmation or disclose the contingency of an absolute, but it cannot replace what it destroys. The insufficiency of suspicion

only increases for Conrad the urgency of discovering an adequate mode of revelation.

These oscillations between suspicion and revelation, demystification and affirmation, leave the reader of Nostromo in a stalemate. But such is indeed man's situation. Conrad fears, in a world where no belief can claim necessity. The suspicious movement of Conradian irony teaches the reader to unmask the pretenses and limitations of any creed. But Conrad's relentless quest for values—his almost strident affirmation, for example, of fidelity, honor, and mastery-insists nonetheless on the need to believe. Unable to resign himself to his negative conclusions, Conrad also affirms the importance of transcending contingency—even if this is an unattainable goal. In words which recall the heroic simplicity of a Singleton or a MacWhirr, the narrator of The Nigger of the "Narcissus" claims: "those are strong who know neither doubts nor hopes."23 Conrad's strength as a novelist is that he knew both-and the anguish of their deadlock makes him appreciate the blessings of ignorance. His doubts and his hopes are equally powerful and ultimately irreconcilable. But this in turn only intensifies his effort to get past their contradiction. Because Conrad cannot transcend the opposition between suspicion and faith, he moves perpetually back and forth between them.

Conrad's unique mode of ontological self-contradiction places him between two of the other great modern students of metaphysics, Heidegger and Derrida. For Heidegger, contradiction discloses Being even as it disguises it. The ontological difference paradoxically allows Being to shine in and through beings at the same time as the rift between it and them conceals it.24 Conrad's contradictions signify the absence of a ground, not its disguised presence. This might seem to align him with Derrida's demystification of the signifier's pretense of delivering a signified which it actually only defers. For Derrida, contradictions reveal the absence of logos-a lack which paradoxically makes meaning possible by permitting (even demanding) the supplementation of one signifier with a series of others.25 Conrad's contradictions may be the precondition for the creation of meaning in his fictional universe, his oscillations producing ever more signifiers which endlessly displace the goal he pursues. But Conrad would rather live in Heidegger's world even if he finds himself trapped in Derrida's. Conrad's contradictions make it possible for him to mean, but they prevent him from speaking the single truth he desires.

The argument is sometimes made that raising metaphysical questions is a way of avoiding political issues and social action. Although this charge may sometimes hold true, the differences between Conrad's, Heidegger's, and Derrida's ontologies also suggest that it is an oversimplification. Their different metaphysics lead to different political standpoints and to different assessments of revolutionary praxis. Heidegger is perhaps the most vulnerable to such an accusation because he claims that "Only a god can save us." That is, he regards all active intervention to change the world as a manifestation of the technological posture which, in its insistent drive to master everything, closes off Being instead of letting it be.²⁶

Conrad is ambivalent about social change not because he prefers to dwell in the openness of Being but because his meditations on contingency disclose insuperable obstacles to achieving a stable, cohesive community and to controlling with certainty the course of any action. Derrida's ethic of semiotic affirmation—"the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming"—celebrates man's liberty and power to create meaning.27 Conrad similarly regards the human world as a play of differences, but his monistic temperament finds in the instability of culture and meaning little reason for rejoicing. Derrida's giddy vision of unrestrained signification conflicts with Conrad's desire for solidarity and his fear of the disasters contingency can wreak. These three metaphysicians do not share a common political platform, and the seriousness of their disagreements suggests that ontology cannot simply be dismissed as a defense against social engagement. Conrad's attitude toward politics oscillates between hope and despair not because he asks ontological questions about power, community, and change but because this questioning uncovers contradictions that defy resolution.

¹ Joseph Conrad, "Autocracy and War" (1905), in Notes on Life and Letters

(Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1926), pp. 97, 108.

² Two especially interesting studies of Conrad's attitude toward imperialism are Hunt Hawkins, "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*," *PMLA*, 94 (1979), 286–99, and John A. McClure, *Kipling and Conrad: The Colonial Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981).

³ Frederick R. Karl, Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives (New York: Farrar,

1979), p. 228.

⁴ Conrad, "Preface" to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (1897), in *Joseph Conrad on Fiction*, ed. Walter F. Wright (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1964), p.

160; emphasis mine.

⁵ For example, see J. Hillis Miller, Poets of Reality (1965; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 13-39; Royal Roussel, The Metaphysics of Darkness: A Study in the Unity and Development of Conrad's Fiction (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1971); and William W. Bonney, Thorns and Arabesques: Contexts for Conrad's Fiction (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980).

⁶ Eloise Knapp Hay, The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad (Chicago: Univ. of

Chicago Press, 1963), p. 15.

⁷ See Avrom Fleishman, Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1967), and Zdzislaw Najder, "Conrad and Rousseau: Concepts of Man and Society," in Joseph Conrad: A Commemoration, ed. Norman Sherry (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1976), pp. 77–90.

8 Fleishman, Conrad's Politics, pp. 56-57.

⁹ Conrad, "Preface" to The Nigger of the "Narcissus," p. 161. ¹⁰ Quoted in Karl, Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives, p. 226.

¹¹ I borrow the terms "ontic" and "ontological" from existential phenomenology, especially Heidegger (although philosophers as different as Roman Ingarden and Jean-Paul Sartre also use them). "Ontic" refers to the realm of particular entities, whereas "ontological" has to do with the Being of beings. The line between the ontic and the ontological is necessarily hard to draw, however, because (as Heidegger notes) "Being is always the Being of an entity." See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962), pp. 28–35.

¹² J. Hillis Miller, "Optic and Semiotic in Middlemarch," in The Worlds of Victorian Fiction, ed. Jerome H. Buckley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ.

Press, 1975), p. 126.

¹³ Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo: A Tale of the Seaboard* (1904; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1926), p. 6. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

¹⁴ Roussel makes a similar point in The Metaphysics of Darkness, p. 4.

¹⁵ In an atypical moment of oversimplification, Frederic Jameson misses this paradox when he calls *Nostromo* "a virtual textbook working-out of the structuralist dictum that all narrative enacts a passage from Nature to Culture" (*The Political Unconscious* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981], p. 272).

¹⁶ Fleishman calls Conrad "unstinting in the hope" that different interests and beliefs "may complement each other in a unified whole—the organic community of the nation" (*Conrad's Politics*, p. 48). Fleishman is aware of Conrad's "ironic perception of the forces . . . that inhibit its realization" (p. ix). But his use of the word "organic" is nevertheless misleading.

¹⁷ Albert J. Guerard argues similarly that "The reader must collaborate not only in the writing of a novel . . . but also in the writing of a country's history"

(Conrad the Novelist [1958; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1970], p. 175).

18 In lines which determinist readings often overlook, however, Conrad is careful to describe the machine as purely contingent—and for that reason all the more absurd, since its determinism is accidental: "the most withering thought is that the infamous thing has made itself; made itself without thought, without conscience, without foresight, without eyes, without heart. It is a tragic accident—and it has happened." See Joseph Conrad's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham, ed. C. T. Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), p. 56.

¹⁹ Edward W. Said is not quite accurate, however, when he argues that for Conrad "Man is never the author, never the beginning, of what he does, no matter how willfully intended his program may be" (Beginnings: Intention and Method [New York: Basic Books, 1975], p. 133). Characters in Nostromo fre-

quently initiate projects, some of which succeed—but whether and how they come to pass defy any individual's agency.

20 Joseph Conrad, Under Western Eyes (1911; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.:

Doubleday, 1924), pp. 134-35.

²¹ For a useful disentanglement of the order of events, see H. M. Daleski, Joseph Conrad: The Way of Dispossession (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977),

pp. 113-15.

²² For similar assessments, see Karl, Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives, p. 228; Daniel R. Schwarz, Conrad: "Almayer's Folly" to "Under Western Eyes" (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980), p. 213; Ian Watt, Conrad in the Nineteenth Century (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), p. 110.

²³ Joseph Conrad, The Nigger of the "Narcissus" (1897; rpt. Garden City.

N.Y.: Doubleday, 1924), p. 25.

²⁴ See Heidegger's analyses of the "rift" and the dialectic between "clearing" and "concealment" in "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–36), *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 1971), pp. 63–64, 53–54.

²⁵ See especially Jacques Derrida, "Differance," in *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973), pp.

129-60.

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, "'Only a God Can Save Us': The *Spiegel* Interview" (1966), in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981), p. 57. Also see Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" and "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper, 1977), pp. 193–242, 287–317.

²⁷ Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Univ. of

Chicago Press, 1978), p. 292.

A. R. Ammons: Ecological Naturalism and the Romantic Tradition

DONALD H. REIMAN

A first-rate poet—that is, a poet sensitive enough to grasp and intelligent enough to express the deepest issues of his or her time and place—is always a mass of contradictions. Even if we call Shakespeare's acknowledged universality an exception, Milton was a Puritan, a revolutionary, a Christian, a humanist, a traditionalist, a defender of the New Science, an idealizer of women, a misogynist. Shelley was an Academic Skeptic, a Platonist, a radical, an agrarian reactionary, a feminist, and a misguided user of women. The examples can be multiplied. One mark of poetic greatness is an ability to entertain and mediate between seemingly contradictory rationalistic statements of belief. For one of the components of poetic, as opposed to scientific, discourse is its capacity to accommodate contraries.

Therefore, in calling A. R. Ammons an "ecological naturalist" I do not deny that his poetry may encompass other philosophical orientations. Obviously a person writing and publishing poetry (rather than, say, meditating in a cave or spinning a prayer wheel) must be in some sense a humanist; he is, in Wordsworth's truism, a man speaking to men. But I believe that what differentiates A. R. Ammons and a number of other contemporary poets (including, prominently, Gary Snyder and Galway Kinnell) from their Romantic and modernist predecessors is that their primary philosophical orientation—the ground of their values—does not reside in an evanescent supernatural source of inspiration (a Spirit of Intellectual Beauty) or in the highest powers of the human mind (the Imagination) but in what Shelley called "the

everlasting universe of things"—the nonhuman, unself-conscious operations of natural processes. Ammons triumphs by finding the words and the images to express the awareness, growing since the time of Galileo and Copernicus, that the Taoists, the pre-Socratics, and Lucretius may have given us a clearer picture of man's place in the knowable universe than did the Sophists and St. Augustine: that the geocentric, homocentric, egocentric view of the nature and destiny of man may be at best a wishful and sometimes a dangerously hubristic misreading of the evidence. At the same time, Ammons follows neither the Stoics, Spinoza, nor other thinkers who sought harmony with Nature/God by joyfully submerging their own identity in the One, nor does he emulate ascetics of various denominations who attempt to reduce the self to a nonentity so as to have no regrets when life ends. Rather, his poems hold in tension the uniqueness of individualities and the ineluctable power of leveling, unifying natural processes. I term the underlying philosophical perspective "Ecological Naturalism"-Naturalism, because unself-conscious Nature, rather than an intelligent God (theism or deism), Mankind (humanism), or the self (egoism), provides the ultimate ground of values; and ecological, because every creature is accorded its own identity and value within the economy of Nature.

I.

In Philip Fried's remarkable interview with Ammons in the second issue of *The Manhattan Review*, Ammons insists (against Fried's humanistic objections) on "the difference between words and things," between the human consciousness and "actuality itself." He declares:

I'm not sure you can change actuality. On the fate side, we may recognize that we have to accept those limitations and the incarnation imposed upon us. So already, the imagination has had to step down a couple of spaces and what we can change, it seems to me, is the structure we make that we think represents things and is our fiction. We can change our fiction and we can change the way we feel about the fiction we make. But we can't really change actuality.¹

In an earlier interview by David I. Grossvogel, published in the special Ammons issue of *Diacritics*, Ammons had emphasized his humanistic mission to find an audience, to give people through his poetry "energy" to live their lives, to find his place both within the hierarchy of poets and in human society. But there, also, Ammons emphasized the influence on his own thinking of

Indian and Chinese philosophy which, when I was younger, I read a good deal, finally coming to Laotse, whom I mentioned earlier. That's my philosophical source in its most complete version... Emerson looks derivative to me of certain of those oriental traditions in the same way as I am derivative of them. In an immediate sense, my forebears are Whitman and Emerson, but in a larger sense my source is the same as theirs.²

Ammons' poetry (or his compulsion to write it in the quantities he does) obviously springs both from his keen, often-expressed search for reconciliation with a human community from which he feels alienated and from his need for consolation in the face of death, which has traumatized him at least since May 1930, when his infant brother died.3 Ammons has ultimately sought comfort by viewing human sorrows as neither illusory or trivial sub specie aeternitatis; rather, he attempts, with a notable record of poetic successes, to combine his limited egoperspective with other perspectives within the same poem or group of poems so that he sees his (any person's) individual fate both from within and from the imagined vantage point of other creatures and of the processes of nature. The self-consciousness remains, but the egoassertiveness is chastened and modified by the counter-assertions of other "I's" or other "eyes." This I/eye pun was surely in Ammons' mind when he named his first volume of poems Ommateum, a word meaning literally "a compound eye."4

In the poems from *Ommateum* that Ammons reprinted in his *Collected Poems*, 1951–1971, the chief method of compounding his "eye/I" is to frustrate the expectations of the Judeo-Christian prophetic/poetic voice that the first poem designates as "Ezra." The theme of the volume parallels that of one of Stephen Crane's aphoristic poems:

A man said to the universe:

"Sir, I exist!"

"However," replied the universe,

"The fact has not created in me

A sense of obligation."

In "So I Said I Am Ezra," the wind and the sea (the younger Ammons' two favorite embodiments of the processes of Nature) remain unimpressed by the self-assertion of the poet: "I listened to the wind / go over my head and up into the night" and "there were no echoes from the waves / The words were swallowed up / in the voice of the surf" Finally, after traversing "bleached and broken fields," the poet is left with the unsympathizing forms of nature:

I am Ezra
As a word too much repeated
falls out of being
so I Ezra went out into the night
like a drift of sand
and splashed among the windy oats
that clutch the dunes
of unremembered seas

(CP, p. 1)

The key word here is "unremembered." For the obvious question raised in the reader's mind is, "unremembered" by whom? No one would be there to "remember" the seas, once "Ezra," symbolic of human self-consciousness, "went out into the night." The poet does not himself ask the question directly, as Shelley does in "Mont Blanc":

And what were thou [Mont Blanc], and earth, and stars, and sea, If to the human mind's imaginings Silence and solitude were vacancy?

The question raised by Ammons' poem cannot be rhetorical, and it can have no positive answer. The seas will be unremembered because, once mankind goes "out into the night," there will be (so far as the poet linears) as a season.

knows) no consciousness to remember anything.

"So I Said I Am Ezra" both sets the problem and carries with it a set of limitations upon the answers that are explored in the poems that follow. "In Strasbourg in 1349" (CP, pp. 2–3) shows the futility of a certain narrow religious attitude toward death and natural disaster. The Christian inhabitants blame a plague on "the Jews" and burn them. The poet, presumably rejecting this policy of scapegoating some distrusted minority, "walked up into the air," and "When morning came / I looked down at the ashes / and rose and walked out of the world." The senselessness of such parochial quarreling is reemphasized in "I Went Out to the Sun," where the sun becomes angry with the moon and the poet urges them not to quarrel, "since all at last must be lost / to the great vacuity" (CP, pp. 6–7).

But there are limits to the possibilities of reconciliation. In many of his attempts to find companionship in the universe, the Ezra-poet fails because he tries to engage the nonhuman on purely human terms. In "Turning," he attempts to court and mate with a lioness, but (like the lady who went for a ride on the back of a tiger) ends up fumbling "about in the darkness for my wings" (*CP*, pp. 11–12). In "With Ropes of Hemp" he lashes his "body to the great oak / saying odes for the

fiber of the oakbark / and the oakwood saying supplications / to the root mesh . . . while eternity / . . . waited with me patient in my experiment"; though the poem ends with the poet "in the night standing saying oaksongs / entertaining my soul to me" (CP, p. 14), we are to judge the experiment as a noble failure, I think, on the same plane as Shelley's attempts, by making his "bed / In charnels and on coffins," to force "some lone ghost / . . . to render up the tale / Of what we are." In these poems from Ommateum, Ammons is rejecting not only the Judeo-Christian humanism that would see man as being made in the image of a self-conscious God and having "dominion . . . over all the earth," but also an easy pseudo-Romantic pantheism or "con-theism." The lioness follows the nature of lionkind and the oak its querculian nature, both quite independent of, and generally unaffected by, human thoughts and words.

If the higher forms of animal and vegetable nature are thus unresponsive to human desires, how much greater is the indifference of the fundamental manifestations of what Shelley's Demogorgon calls "Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change." Several early poems treat the dissolution of the individual amid unknowing, uncaring surroundings. In "Chaos Staggered Up the Hill," chaos, in passing, "engulfed me / and I couldn't know dissolving / it had rhizobia [i.e., nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria] with it / to make us green some other place" (CP, p. 6). The key word here is "us," implying that a fundamental community links the conscious self that dissolves into chaos and the material elements that recombine into new forms of life. In "Consignee," one of the earliest poems in the canon, but first published in 1965 and collected in Northfield Poems,7 the individual who is "consigned" to "death, the diffuse one," "quarreled and devised a while / but went on / having sensed a nice dominion in the air, / the black so round and deep" (CP, p. 8). Here the surroundings are still oblivious to the fate of the self, but again, the imagination—though powerless to "change actuality" has (as Ammons declared that it could) changed "our fiction and ... the way we feel about the fiction we make." Instead of resisting fate to the bitter end, in the manner of Byron's Manfred, Goethe's Faust, or the aging Yeats, Ammons changes the myths of death into a return to the "nice dominion" of a comforting, womb-like peacefulness.

In "Whose Timeless Reach" (CP, p. 33), "Ezra" resists the easy logic of "the frozen mountain" that tells him "death does / not take away[:] it / ends giving [,] halts bounty"; Ezra's mind freely associates the word "Bounty" with "ships / that I might take and helm right / out through space / dwarfing these safe harbors and / their values"—in

short, that he might avoid the limitations imposed on thought "by bones" and, instead, glide "eternally." But in this and other poems, such free association obviously comes to no more than a wishful attempt to evade actuality.

In the long reach of Ammons' early vision, even art and human artifacts possess no ultimate, lasting value. At the death of the greatest human intellect—one that has probed alike the secrets of interstellar space and those of the catacombs—"no one knew / that he had ever flown / he was no less / no more known / to stones he left a stone" ("Having Been Interstellar," *CP*, pp. 19–20). And in "Coming to Sumer," Ezra, who here represents human imagination turned into mere greed for wealth and fame, "rifled the mud and wattle huts," looking among the graves for artifacts of "recent mournings"—"gold leaves and lapis lazuli beads / in the neat braids loosening from the skull"; finding nothing, he sets fire to the huts and abandons "the unprofitable poor" to move on, "casual with certainty" toward the tombs of "king and priest" in Sumer (*CP*, p. 22).

Finally, "In the Wind My Rescue Is" states unequivocally that the poet's hope lies not in the assertion or preservation of his own identity, not in stone monuments to the self, which would merely be eroded by time or ravaged by imaginative spoilers from some future civilization. Rather his "rescue" lies in the wind as process, the force of natural change that continuously transforms the land and stirs up the waters. By identifying with the process of change itself, the poet imaginatively attaches himself to that which is truly eternal. The poem reads, in full:

In the wind my rescue is in whorls of it like winged tufts of dreams bearing through the forms of nothingness the gyres and hurricane eyes the seed safety of multiple origins

I set it my task
to gather the stones of earth
into one place
the water modeled sand molded stones
from
the water images
of riverbeds in drought
from the boundaries of the mind

from
sloping farms
and altitudes of ice and
to mount upon the highest stone
a cardinal
chilled in the attitude of song

But the wind has sown loose dreams in my eyes
and telling unknown tongues drawn me out beyond the land's end and rising in long parabolas of bliss borne me safely from all those ungathered stones⁸

If one reads this poem in the truncated version published in Selected Poems (1968) it seems to stand as a counter-piece to a poem written in 1956 and published in 1958 (Wright, p. 87), Ammons' "Apologia pro Vita Sua." There the poet "started picking up the stones / throwing them into one place" until he had built a cairn that, even after his death, remains a human artifact amid an alien nature, "a foreign thing desertless in origin" (CP, p. 38). In these early poems, Ammons defines the central issue of his poetry: Man is one among many creatures, and all his self-consciousness, imagination, and creativity have no power to hold back the inexorable forces of time and change that will swallow up mankind and all traces of human existence. Yet he remains alienated from other natural creatures by apprehending the fact of death and by feeling sorrow amid the joys of sensory experiences because of their foreseen ending.

II.

The tension between the intellectual acceptance of the "actuality" of death and the reality of man's emotional longing to achieve permanence, either for the individual identity or for the values that the individual espouses, has been a central issue for all Romantic, Victorian, Modernist, and Postmodernist poets. And the melancholy of the human being who is unable to submerge himself in the sensual pleasures of merely natural creatures has been the theme of poems at least from Horace and the *Pervigilium Veneris* onward.

Ammons for years refused to accept the skepticism toward the findings of science with which the Romantics had protected their hopes

and their idealism. Shelley could write at one time that the only reason for the human idea of immortality is a psychological variant of the physical law of inertia: "This desire to be for ever as we are; the reluctance to a violent and unexperienced change, which is common to all the animated and inanimate combinations of the universe, is, indeed, the secret persuasion which has given birth to the opinions of a future state."9 But he could sufficiently doubt the logic of such reasoning and the evidence of the senses to assert his "modest creed" that "in this life / Of error, ignorance and strife- / Where nothing is-but all things seem, / ... that death itself must be, / Like all the rest,—a mockery."10 Byron, who sometimes relied on Pyrrhonist Skepticism, at the end of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage undercuts his praise of human artistic achievements by reminding his readers that in the face of the "deep and dark blue ocean" ("the image of Eternity"), man and all his achievements are transitory and trivial: "He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan, / Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown." But Byron can then immediately claim some affinity with the monster, expressing a feeling of trust toward this awesome power: "And I have loved thee, Ocean! . . . 'twas a pleasing fear, / For I was as it were a child of thee, / And trusted to thy billows "11 Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman looked to a similar harmony between human nature and the underlying spirit of the universe. But Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, Browning, Eliot, and Auden ultimately put their faith in a God beyond and at odds with mere mortality, while a number of writers of the Victorian and modern periods on both sides of the Atlantic-including, at moments, Mark Twain, Hardy, James Thomson ("B. V."), and Hemingway—saw the hostility between the highest human values and the ordinary course of nature and societies, without finding any way to resolve the dichotomy because they could not believe in a supernaturalist solution.

Algernon Swinburne was one of the few English writers of the later nineteenth century to deny the traditional hopes for either immortality or the divine redemption of humane values without succumbing to either bitter irony or despair. And he did so in the spirit of Lucretius and the pre-Christian Graeco-Roman philosophers: death is a natural part of life and the absence of any afterlife frees human beings from fears that the deeds of their restless, limited, imperfect selves will bring them to a judgment that, under the standards of perfection, they are incapable of passing unscathed. If the Good Shepherd, the personal God of pity and mercy, is removed from the cosmic vision, death

can be seen as a better option than an eternal life that merely extends infinitely the existence of mortal limitations, doubts, and fears.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea. 12

In order to be comfortable with such a view of human destiny, the poet must keep his eye firmly on mortal limitations—those moments of dissatisfaction with identity and its surroundings that, at times, oppress even the most orthodox religious poets, as in the "terrible sonnets" of G. M. Hopkins:

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me; Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse. Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see The lost are like this, and their scourge to be As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.¹³

In order to rest human hopes in the necessity of dissolution, the poet must emphasize, not life's "moments of vision" but its "satires of circumstance" (to use the titles of two of Hardy's poetic volumes). Keats's "To Autumn," which some have read as a positive acceptance of mortality, resolves itself, when seen in the context of Keats's life and poetry, into a last-ditch stand at a naturalistic fall-back position after his humanistic hopes had been overrun by the grim reality of deaths past and death to come. And Wallace Stevens' positive naturalistic declarations in "Sunday Morning" and the rest of Harmonium were to be undercut by the dissatisfactions with mortality voiced in Ideas of Order and subsequent volumes, complaints not to be fully silenced until Stevens' very last poems returned to accept "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself." 14

In Stevens' case, his two phases of naturalism may index three stages of his development, passages of life now recognized as being as important to the psychology of the adult as to that of the child. Ammons' career exhibits a similar development that may explain certain shifts in the emphases of his poetry over the years. Although the evidence is far from complete, I think that there have been thus far three major phases and one important smaller development in Ammons' poetic career. First, in the poems written between 1951 and the

end of 1963, Ammons pursued the gnomic and prophetic styles of the "Ezra" poems that I have quoted. The poet's desires are sharply stated and just as sharply answered by voices representing either other natural creatures or the universe at large. Beginning with *Tape for the Turn of the Year* (1965; written December 1963–January 1974), the style loosens, becoming much more colloquial and confessional, presumably under the influence of William Carlos Williams and the generation of Lowell, Roethke, Berryman, Ginsberg, and their admirers. This opening up of Ammons' style does not, however, mark a major thematic development, because he included in each subsequent volume through *Briefings* (1971) poems that he had written from the very earliest period of his published poetry (1951–1955). And I find no sharp break in his worldview through the first twenty years of his poetic production.

With the publication of Sphere: The Form of a Motion (1974), a new Ammons clearly emerges. And looking back into the earlier work from the perspective of Sphere, I see the beginning, in such poems as "Summer Session 1968" (Uplands), of what may have been Ammons' major mid-life crisis. Ammons worked through this crisis in The Snow Poems (1977), thereby freeing himself to move on to an entirely new—and what seems to me his richest—vein of poetry in his recent volumes A Coast of Trees (1981), Worldly Hopes (1982), and Lake Effect Country (1983), as well as in "The Ridge Farm," a major poem published in the thirty-fifth anniversary issue of The Hudson Review (36 [Spring 1983], 75–140).

III.

If Ommateum sets the assertiveness and, occasionally, the ruthlessness of human individuality against the indifference of nature, Expressions of Sea Level (1964) shows the poet adapting his psyche and his myths to the actuality that "Ezra" had found so depressing. In "Raft," the first and keynote poem in this carefully wrought volume, the poet "called the wind" and, after he had empathetically "vanished into the beauty / of any thing I saw / and loved" along the shore—"pod-stem, cone branch, rocking / bay grass"—he sets sail on a round reed raft, at first poling out from shore and then giving himself joyously to wind and wave. The theme continues in poems with titles such as "Risks and Possibilities" and "Terrain"—"The soul is a region without definite boundaries: / . . . it floats (self-adjusting) like the continental mass"—and through such positive images of death as that in "Bridge," where

the poet watches people "go over the steep moonbridge at the pond's narrows," their fleshly reality at first "rising on the bridge" above their images, and he then sees them "descend into the pond, / where bridge and mirror-bridge merge / at the bank / returning the images to themselves."¹⁷

When in "Unsaid" (toward the middle of Expressions of Sea Level), the poet asks his reader, "Have you listened for the things I have left out? / ... the non-song / in my singing," we are reminded that throughout this important volume of Ammons' young manhood, the only expressions of human love are for "Nelly Myers" (pp. 14-17), a woman of limited intellect, more a part of nature than a rational being, "not a member of the family" who "came to live in the house I was born in" and who cried real tears "as I left / to go back to college (damn all colleges)"; for his hog "Sparkle," butchered at the end of "Hardweed Path Going" (pp. 50-53); and for his mule "Silver" (pp. 57-58). The rest of the poems keep their distance from sympathetic emotions, to lose the self in identifications with wind, sea, and other natural phenomena. The final poem, "Nucleus," which is the only one in the volume to show the adult poet in his social relations (as a businessman, traveling to Montreal to look over a factory that his company may buy), is the most distanced and alienated poem of all. Absent-"unsaid"-in these poems and in Ammons' other early work, is a clear statement of the place of the individual in the social nexus-man as a lover, householder, breadwinner, or citizen, who is responsible to others as well as to his own destiny. In this respect, the early Ammons is a true heir to the tradition of T. S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens, a poet of metaphysical and epistemological meditation, writing an involuted poetry about the dilemmas faced by the poetic individual. The same concentration (or limitation) characterizes Ammons' next two miscellaneous volumes, Corson's Inlet (1965) and Northfield Poems (1966). But between these two, Cornell University Press also published, in May 1965, Ammons' first extended poem in a much different style.18

Tape for the Turn of the Year is openly written on experimental formal principles. Drafted from 6 December 1963 through 10 January 1964, just as Expressions of Sea Level was coming off the press, 19 Tape represents Ammons' progress from the "pastoral" scope of his early short poems toward the epic scope that validates the emergence of major poetic talents. As with Ammons' earlier rejections of traditional modes of pastoral, so he casts his "epic" in a mode designed to frustrate conventional expectations. Yet, like Byron's Don Juan, Tape for the Turn of the Year fulfills many of the conditions of the "primary epic," as C. S.

Lewis applied that term to *The Iliad, The Odyssey*, and *Beowulf*. ²⁰ Ammons' poem openly plays off *The Odyssey*. He addresses the Muse (p. 1) and contrasts the idea of 10,000 years, so tiny when viewed as part of geologic time, with the magnitude that 10,000 years represent in terms of human history—taking us back before Troy and Sumer (pp. 5–7). Ammons writes:

I wish I had a great
story to tell: . . .
. . . . but
I can't tell a great
story: if I were
Odysseus, I couldn't
survive
pulling away from
Lestrygonia, 11 of
12 ships lost
with 11 crews: I couldn't
pull away with
the joy of one
escaped with his life:

(pp. 8-9)

And then Ammons realizes that he *does* have a story to tell: "how / a man comes home / from haunted / lands and transformations"—not literal, but ideological and psychological hauntings and transformations that have alienated him from Nature:

bring the man home, to acceptance of his place

and time,

responsibilities and limitations: I mean nothing mythical—Odysseus wandering in ghost-deep background—I mean only or as much as restoration which takes many forms & meanings:

(p. 10)

Throughout Tape, Ammons emphasizes his efforts to reconcile both himself and his readers to the values of the quotidian world,

unburdened by great goals or ulterior aspirations. At one point, near the middle of the poem, he comes to question even why he as a poet needs "to throw / this structure / against the flow / which I cannot stop?" And he recommends (though without fully practicing) "acquiescence, acceptance: / the silent passage into / the stream, going along, / not holding back" (pp. 88–89). At this point, Ammons defines his work as poet "to transfigure these / days / so you'll want to keep / them" (p. 89). Later, after examining the limitations of human understanding, he suddenly announces:

Lord, I'm in your hands: I surrender: it's your will and not mine: you give me singing shape & you turn me to dust:

(p. 141)

And there Ammons asks how he can praise "the Maker"—asking if the best he can do with his "long thin song" isn't "to be / simply & completely / human?" (pp. 141–42). Like the other creatures of Nature, human beings should "leave structure / to the Maker / & praise / by functioning" (pp. 142–43). Still later in the poem, Ammons links the doctrine of accepting reality to creativity:

they say creation is thwarted unless a man accepts & realizes himself, stands open & finished as a flower:

(pp. 157-58)

Ammons demonstrates the miscellaneous character of the reality whose flow he seeks to transfigure by the subjects he chooses to treat in *Tape*. The poem is a heightened diary of Ammons' mental and emotional life, as well as a record of his impressions of external events for all but three of the days from 6 December through 10 January.²¹ Having allowed the shape and length of the poem to be governed by the width and length of the adding-machine tape on which he typed his draft, Ammons allows the contents of his poem to be generated by the flow of events and emotions that occupy his mind between the time he put the tape in the typewriter and the time he filled it with words. Thus the form and contents echo the poem's theme: humanity must be

content to go with the flow and to renounce—or downplay—systems and structures, rational constructs, in favor of untutored reality.

There are at least three other points to be made about the style of Tape. First, its very use of the physical materials—the length and breadth of an adding-machine tape to give shape to the poem—is not original in either the epic tradition or in modern literature. The Homeric epics themselves were apparently shaped originally into episodes of a length convenient to dramatic recitation and then, during later Alexandrian redactions, were divided into twenty-four books on the basis of the then-standard lengths of the papyrus rolls onto which they were being copied about the first century B.C.²² More recently, Gertrude Stein divided such works as Stanzas in Meditation into sections. the varying length of which was determined by the number of pages of the French schoolchildren's blank copybooks in which she drafted her work.23 In this practice. Stein—like Ammons—exercised considerable powers of choice. She wrote on every other line; sometimes she would use two copybooks to make up a section, just as Ammons chose the width and length of the particular roll of tape he purchased.

The second point is that Ammons, far from really "going with the flow," made a large number of aesthetic choices that produced a work of art rather than a collection of random jottings or graffiti. Besides choosing to write "a long / thin / poem," rather than one jotted randomly to fill blank spaces on backs of envelopes, letters, and advertising circulars, or whatever flowed onto his desk-or one scratched on stones and logs during his walks-Ammons also carefully chose, for their thematic values, what subjects were to be included and what excluded. (He mentions some representative meals, not others; urinating, but not defecating; having sex with his wife, but not the substance of conversations with his friends or business associates.) In Tape Ammons follows the lead of William Carlos Williams and of the generation of Auden, Lowell, Roethke, and Berryman in breaking away from the tight, thematic reticence of the high Modernists. He gives up the mode of symbolist poetry that, in the words of W. D. Snodgrass, ignores "matter and external reality" and becomes "a search for a state of Being, a rejection of that world of Becoming in which we are born, grow, and die."24 Thus, though not part of the movement into "confessional poetry" that centered around Lowell and Berryman, Ammons reflected the reemergence of the Whitmanian tradition that included at one end the "confessionals" and spanned a wide range of poets through the Black Mountain group and Gary Snyder to Allen Ginsberg and the "Beats."

In one important passage in *Tape for the Turn of the Year*, Ammons declares, "ecology is my word: tag / me with that: . . . that's the door: here's / the key: come in, / celebrant / to one meaning / that totals my meanings" (p. 112). Three pages later, he provides two instances of ecological modes of life:

the plains Indians centered their lives on the chase: rooted in a moving herd of buffalo! a center stabilized in instability:

or the reverse: the barnacle on a rock, stationary, depends on the sea, to bring it food:

(p. 115)

After adding the word "provisional" to "ecology" (p. 116), Ammons exhorts his readers not to "establish the / boundaries / first, / . . . and then / pour / life into them" but rather to "let centers / proliferate / from / self-justifying motions!" (p. 116). At the end of Tape, Ammons answers the question, "how does one come / home:" in these words:

self-acceptance: reconciliation, a way of going along with this world as it is:

nothing ideal: not as you'd have it:

(p. 203)

IV.

By the time Ammons wrote Sphere: The Form of a Motion, he had apparently changed his perspective. For there he seems to provide a predetermined shape, to "establish boundaries first . . . and then pour life into them," both formally and in content. Visible in Sphere is the influence of Harold Bloom and other humanistic critics—many of them ephebes of Bloom—who contributed to the special issue of Diacritics

devoted to Ammons, in which were first published the initial ten sections of Sphere.

The poem's structure appears, superficially, to be as formal as that of *Tape* was random: besides the introductory poem "For Harold Bloom," *Sphere* contains 155 sections, each consisting of four unrhymed tercets (à la Stevens) with lines of approximately equal length. But closer examination reveals a surging antiformal spirit that kicks against this apparent symmetry. Just as *Tape* fulfilled its epic intentions partly through its rejection of stereotyped epic conventions, so *Sphere's* superficial adherence to the formalities and thematic concerns of Stevens' brand of Modernism turns out to underline Ammons' fundamental differences from that tradition. For the subjects treated in *Sphere* are roughly the same as those in *Tape*, with the flow covering a longer span of time, the rapid turn of more than one seasonal cycle: In section 19, "it's spring"; by section 29, on Halloween "spirits / loosen from the ground . . . there's a lit door: / hello: we're pirates" (p. 23), leading thence to winter snow (#33–34) and a renewal of spring (#37).

Ammons, moreover, replicates not only the flowing, time-bound mode of *Tape*, but at various points he restates the same ideals:

... to be saved is here, local and mortal: everything else is a glassworks of flight: a crystal hankering after the unlikely: ...

(#33; p. 25)

redemptions despise the reality: when may it not be our task so to come into the knowledge of the reality as to participate therein: wherever the imagined lands it's

likely to brush up against a thorn and pop or get hit by a bus on the freeway or at the minimum be thought flatulent: (#59; pp. 36–37)

... I sought out peaks and stars and at my cost sang them high and bright: you don't have to be superhuman to survive—let go and let your humanity rise to its natural

height, said the star, and you will in that smallness be as great as I: so I sat down and sang and mountains fell and at last I knew my measurable self immeasurable (#111; p. 60)

Man should accept his mortal, limited humanity and be careful in submitting to his dreams or aspirations.

Yet aspirations toward the supermortal definitely shape the superstructure of *Sphere* in a way they did not affect most of the work brought together in *Collected Poems*, 1951–1971. Man feels his separation from merely natural creation through his *longing* to reach beyond mere nature. As Ammons puts it in the introductory poem "For Harold Bloom":

I do not speak to the wind now: for having been brought this far by nature I have been brought out of nature and nothing here shows me the image of myself: (p. [5])

And in *Sphere*, more than in most of the earlier poems, the role of the *poet* is seen to be central to the human condition. Ammons attempts to escape his fear (if not the reality) of death through word-games, of which the many puns and anagrams scattered through the poem—e.g., "scared / sacred" (#104) "acme came" (#109), and "big ditties" (#135) are *low* instances and of which manipulation of language to create the poem itself is a *high* example. Portraying himself as magician, the poet, with his "hocus focus" (p. 21), "hocus pocus" (p. 59), or "magnum hokum" (p. 77), seeks a way to transform his control of "the life of words" into control of life (#109; p. 59). Ultimately he fails, but at the poem's end, in the best tragic-humanistic tradition, there are assertions, reinforced by heavy-handed echoes of Wordsworth and Shelley, that man's unsuccessful attempts to reach beyond his grasp elevate human consciousness—and even America and its astronauts—above the mortal sphere into some kind of demigodic Valhalla.

Yet Sphere as a poem cannot, finally, validate the most blatant humanistic aspirations tacked on in the final sections. While Tape, with its understated and limited affirmations, drawn from the honest grappling with the stream of experience, rose beyond its ostensible form to the status of an epic of modern consciousness, Sphere sinks into bathetic anti-epic under the weight of its unstable mixture of factual reportage and unsupported (and only half-believed) assertions. In Sphere, Ammons pretends to observe our little sphere, the Earth, from a cosmic perspective, with the poet-magician's consciousness serving as the arbiter of values, creating through its "magnum hokum" illusions of imaginative order. Repeatedly, the poet asserts that "though nothing shaped stays," "the imagination, / though bodiless, is shaped . . . and so can dwell in nothingness" (#108, p. 58). Not only does civilization, finally, depend on the creative magic of poetry, but each person in order to give meaning to his life must become a poet. When Ammons

tries to reassert Whitman's call for an America of poets, the passage reeks of forced, insincere emotion and, in fact, noticeable embarrassment.

... I didn't mean to talk about my poem, but to tell others how to be poets: I'm interested in you, and I want you to be a poet: I want, like Whitman, to found

a federation of loveship, not of queers but of poets, where there's a difference: that is, come on and be a poet, queer or straight, adman or cowboy, librarian or dope fiend,

housewife or hussy: (I see in one of the monthlies an astronaut is writing poems-that's what I mean guys): now, first of all, the way to write poems is just to start: it's like

learning to walk or swim or ride the bicycle, you just go after it: . . .

... O compatriotos.

sing your hangups and humiliations loose into song's disengagements (which, by the way, connect, you know, when they come back round the other way): O comrades! . . .

(#125-26; pp. 66-67)

Clearly, Ammons did not have his heart in this kind of bombast, which was mixed with a stand-up-and-salute-the-flag patriotism in adjacent passages that seems to reflect his reaction to protests against the Viet Nam War. If Ammons inherits Whitman's mantle, it is not basically as a proselytizer for every man a poet, but as an expounder of the relation of quotidian experience to his own inner being. Ammons' expounded self, unlike Whitman's, exposes isolation and loneliness, rather than a sense of community and love. The condescension inherent in the passage I have quoted from Sphere, #125-126, is totally foreign to Ammons' better poetry, which grapples with his own fears and doubts, rather than patting the rest of mankind paternally on the head.

Ammons superficially adopted the doctrines of the Bloomian humanists in Sphere, I believe, because the existential angst that had fueled his poetry from the beginning was compounded during the late Sixties and early Seventies by the common mid-life crisis that strikes men when they realize that they are growing old and may never achieve the goals they have set for themselves. On the verge of such a crisis in 1963-64 (as Tape suggests), Ammons had postponed its impact by changing jobs and through the success he enjoyed in publishing four

volumes of poems in three years (1964–66) and then winning consecutive fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. But though the conventional signs of success and recognition were there, Ammons was still reaching out toward his audience, trying to awaken in others (in Shelley's words) "a community with what we experienced within ourselves." ²⁵

Ammons seems, from the evidence of the poetry, to have turned his eyes toward the kind of youthful feminine beauty he celebrates in "Guitar Recitativos,"26 perhaps the students he describes at the end of "Summer Session 1968" as "the 18-year-old / seedbeds." But he declares that "knowledge is to be my insemination: / . . . with my trivia / I'll dispense dignity, a sense of office, / formality they can define themselves against: / the head is my sphere!"27 The purpose for which Ammons chose to exploit his magisterial authority was to inculcate a doctrine of life to his students and readers. As his earlier poems clearly indicate, however, he had (and has) a deep distrust of all doctrines and dogmas. Supported by praise of the humanistic aspects of his works and by the critical recognition that resulted from Bloom's enthusiasm for his poetry,28 Ammons, probably subconsciously, tried to turn his mid-life doubts about his own achievements and powers of communication into a positive message for younger and future generations as Shelley, at a comparable moment of self-doubt, advocated in "Ode to the West Wind."29 Whereas Tape exhibits honest self-doubt, Sphere suffers from a superfluity of assumed bravado.

The same is true of the middle-length poems that lead up to Sphere—"Summer Session 1968," "Essay on Poetics," "Extremes and Moderations," and "Hibernaculuum." Though each of these four poems shows Ammons' mature command of language and his mastery of his own ideas, they suffer from the obvious effects of pressures—both internal and external in origin—to write poems in the tradition of Wallace Stevens' later meditations, thereby fulfilling the preconceptions of Ammons' academic critics.

V.

The Snow Poems volume (1977) reveals what students of Byron's poetry in our age of Freud-conscious criticism will recognize: the psychological trauma underlying Ammons' pervasive sense of alienation from others originated in the fear and hostility his father had aroused in him during childhood. Ammons' early love of books and language

and his sympathy (expressed in *Expressions of Sea Level*) for the mistreated mule Silver, the slaughtered hog Sparkle,³¹ and the feebleminded Nelly Myers all seem—in the light of *The Snow Poems*—to originate in a revulsion against a bullying father who "sure was a mess," but with whom Ammons at the age of fifty can now identify and even confuse himself.³² In a gloss-passage to "When in early / December," Ammons recalls his father saying to him: "some day / your mouth will / get you in trouble" and "you'll be a preacher, / like your uncle"; to this Ammons the poet now replies, "close enough, in that / I try to give the / word life." Then he adds:

oh, my father, I am one of the few left to miss you I do not miss you much³³

Later in the volume, we discover (perhaps as the poet himself first recognizes) that the origins of Ammons' filial hostility resided in his father's gratuitous sadism. In "My Father Used to Tell of An," he writes: "what my father enjoyed / most—in terms of pure, / high pleasure—was / scaring things."34 If we put the evidence of these poems together with the report that when Ammons' father lost his own farm during the Depression, he supported his family by serving as a court officer or sheriff's deputy whose job it was to dispossess other debtors (a task at which he excelled because everyone was afraid of him), we have a picture of someone who had the power to turn a sensitive, imaginative child toward books and the rewards offered by supportive teachers. Ammons begins one of the most powerful of The Snow Poems: "When one is a child one lives / in helplessness, in terror / of arbitrary force, and in the / fear of death" (p. 180). Even the memories of his childhood attempts to identify with his father have soured upon recollection: "I carved my father's / initials and my own in / a treetrunk and 1937: / I would not want to see that / work again" ("Arm's Length Renders One," p. 233). Yet he needs to be reconciled with the father his hatred of whom drove him toward poetry, the "dud / dad" (p. 156) who "was so / strong he could carry me and / my sister, one leaning to / each shoulder, with our / feet in the big wooden slop bucket," but who "died with not a leg / to stand on" (p. 230).35 Finally, though he concedes the impossibility of such reconciliation across the grave, Ammons admits that he finds his father in himself:

My father, I hollow for you in the ditches
O my father, I say,

and when brook light, mirrored, worms, against the stone ledges I think it an unveiling or coming loose, unsheathing of flies O apparition, I cry, You have entered in and how may you come out again your teeth will not root your eyes cannot unwrinkle, your handbones may not quiver and stir O, my father, I cry, are you returning: I breathe and see: it is not you yet it is you

(p. 276)

Ammons' confession in *The Snow Poems* of his deep emotional ambivalence toward his father seems, in part, to have liberated him from a primary aspect of his existential obsession—his feeling of separation from other human beings. In the midst of *The Snow Poems*, Ammons cries out: "I have become so lonely / that only the word / is free and large enough to take my / mind off / the world going day / by day over the brink / used up but unused" (p. 191). But by the end he can write, with a conviction that rings true:

I am myself:
I am so scared and sad I can hardly bear to speak and yet delight breaks falls through me and drives me off laughing down a dozen brooks:

* * * * * *

I am free: I feel free, I think: my chains have healed into me as wires heal into trees

the saving world saves by moving, lost, out of the real world which loses all

(p. 287)

And most significant is the character of the incident that leads to this affirmation. Ammons has, on his walk, stopped to pet a neighbor's "frizzled schnauzer," whom he terms "the old fellow, friend" and of whom he declares: "he knows me: we were / friends last fall: / I am myself" (pp. 286-87, italics added). Nobody who has ever encountered in Gertrude Stein's writing a similar test for identity—"I am I because my little dog knows me"36—can doubt the significance of Ammons' affirmation. Ammons starts to reknit the genuine community of identity and love, ruptured during his childhood, not by proclaiming a fellowship of poets all over America, but beginning with the humble old schnauzer "stretching up toward my face" (p. 286). Now that he is free to be himself—"FARM BOY MAKES GOOD," "REDNECK ... UNDER TOTEM / WASP"37—he turns against "the lords of volition," who have littered his property with beer cans and other refuse, to embrace those who glide with, and who even facilitate, the flow of nature by picking up after those self-indulgent ones to maintain "a neat ditch with clipped banks" ("They Say It Snowed," pp. 291-92).

Contemporaneous with parts of The Snow Poems are several of the thirty short poems that Ammons published in an expensive limited edition entitled Highgate Road in July 1977. Eight of these poems had been printed earlier in periodicals (one as early as 1965, the others between 1974 and March 1977) and "For Doyle Fosso" had been issued in a single printed sheet in sixty copies at Winston-Salem, N.C., in June 1977.38 But the twenty-one previously unpublished poems join these to form a volume that evidences Ammons' developing sense of freedom and self-confidence and growing warmth toward those around him. The collection, "dedicated to my son, John, with all my love" (words that Ammons paralleled in the dedication of SLP in 1980), also contains poems "For Louise and Tom Gossett" and "For Doyle Fosso" which reflect Ammons' friendship with two professors of English at his alma mater, Wake Forest, where he spent his sabbatical year from Cornell (1974-75) as Poet-in-Residence. The thirty poems range from the clever sophistication of "North Street" ("I tipped my head / to go under the / low boughs but // the sycamore mistook / my meaning and / boughed back") to the homespun, laconic wisdom of "Handle":

Belief is okay but can do very little for you unless you would kill for it in which case it is worth too much to have or not worth having.

But with most of the poems apparently occasional in origin and the longest of these "briefings" reaching only nineteen short lines ("Significances," p. 4), this minivolume is too elliptical to indicate clearly the direction in which the poet intended to set his course after *The Snow Poems*.

That direction emerges unequivocally in Ammons' next volume, A Coast of Trees, published by Norton in 1981, which underscores his positive attitude toward both nature and the human community around him. Dedicated simply "for Phyllis" (his wife), as Expressions of Sea Level had been, the volume is keynoted by the deep composure of its first short poem, "Coast of Trees." There the question, "how are we to find holiness" is answered by a faith in acceptance and a humble giving up of "all mechanisms of / approach" (p. 1). The poem concludes in the Taoist realization "that whatever it is it is in the Way and / the Way in it, as in us, emptied full." In "Continuing," the poet resumes his habit of questioning "the mountain." After seeing that the leaves of yesteryear are beginning to decay, he asks, "what becomes of things: / ... one / mourns the dead but who / can mourn those the dead mourned"; he receives an answer (quite gentle, coming from one of Ammons' mountains) that "most time . . . lies / in the thinnest layer: who / could bear to hear of it" (p. 4). And as the poet scoops up the sandy soil that remains from the decay of earlier generations of leaves, he seems to accept the mountain's final thought: "it / will do for another year."

In A Coast of Trees, Ammons exhibits an entirely new interest in using poetry itself—rather than simply dedications—to commemorate those who have been important to him personally. (The fourth poem, for example, is entitled "In Memoriam / Mae Noblitt.") Ammons' recurring questions about death and human significance also assume a new form. Instead of centering on the facts of death and dissolution, he inquires about the nature of love and of the grief that attends bereavement:

is love a reality we made here ourselves and grief—did we design that—or do these, like currents, whine in and out among us merely

as we arrive and go: (p. 7)

His answer, too, assumes a new form. The limitations of the earthly milieu that we can comprehend with our physical senses yield to a faith in a higher "reality we agree with, / that agrees with us," which "arrives / to touch, joining with / us from far away" (p. 7).

If this hint of supernaturalism surprises Ammons' readers, they have only to recall his continuing distrust of all philosophical and logical systems, as well as the strong element of religious quest throughout his work. Ammons follows the lead of Wordsworth, who in *The River Duddon* first portrays the life of man naturalistically in terms of a stream that ultimately winds somewhere safe to sea, but then has an "After-Thought" in which he distinguishes between the river (which "was, and is, and will abide") and all human individuals: "the brave, the mighty, and the wise / We Men, who in our morn of youth defied / The elements, must vanish;—be it so!" Wordsworth then, in the final lines of the sonnet, asserts that men can live truly human lives only if they have hope that the significance of their lives can, in some way, go beyond the limits of their physical being:

Enough, if something from our hands have power To live, and act, and serve the future hour; And if, as toward the silent tomb we go, Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower, We feel that we are greater than we know.³⁹

This hopeful feeling, going against the grain of rationalistic and scientistic dogmatisms, also sustained Shelley in his elegiac duty in *Adonais*, where Keats/Adonais "wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead; / Thou [the cruel reviewer] canst not soar where he is sitting now" (lines 336–37); the young poet/martyr's significance is transmitted, through his poems, to the beauties of Nature he celebrated (e.g., the moon and nightingales) and through the example of his career, which is present wherever "lofty thought / Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair" (lines 392–93). Thus Ammons in *A Coast of Trees* moves closer to—though he does not quite join—the Romantics, whose philosophical Skepticism enabled them to trust the heart's single eye more than the thousands of flickering lights that spangle Reason's darkness.

The best and most important single poem in A Coast of Trees is

"Easter Morning," not, I think, because it outshines the rest of the collection (as Helen Vendler seems to imply in her sensitive New Republic review),40 but because it epitomizes and utilizes the new psychic freedom that Ammons had won for his poetry at such cost in The Snow Poems—a freedom that is evident throughout A Coast of Trees. "Easter Morning," set at the North Carolina cemetery where most of his relatives lie buried, treats the same theme as Henry James's "The Jolly Corner": "I have a life that did not become, / that turned aside and stopped, / astonished" (lines 1-3; p. 19). In The Snow Poems, A. R. Ammons saw in himself traces of the "redneck" East Carolina dirt farmer that he might have become, had he not rebelled so fiercely against his father's tyranny and had not the U.S. Navy and the G.I. Bill made it possible for him to postpone going home again. In "Easter Morning," Ammons attempts to weave together the threads of his torn experience, to bind age to age in natural piety, in conscious opposition to Wallace Stevens' joyful sundering of Modernist humanism from its roots and traditions in "Sunday Morning."

In "Easter Morning" Ammons revisits his "home country" to contemplate the graves of his baby brother, his "trinket aunts who always had a little / something in their pocketbooks" for him, uncles, schoolteachers, and "mother and father there, too," "collected in one place waiting, particularly, but not for me" (pp. 19–20). Recalling that when, as a small child, he stood "by the road / . . . crying out for / help," the "great ones . . . / could not or did / not hear," he now realizes that their failure to answer his cries has, in part, cut him off from "my place where / I must stand and fail" (p. 21). Yet, returned there on "a picture-book, letter-perfect / Easter morning," he sees "two great birds, / maybe eagles," flying from south to north, who stop and circle, "looking perhaps for a draft" and then turn to continue their journey northward. From this omen he draws a moral:

... it was a sight of bountiful majesty and integrity: the having patterns and routes, breaking from them to explore other patterns or better ways to routes, and then the return:

(p. 22)

The purposeful flight of the "great birds" that ends "Easter Morning" contrasts with closing images in Keats's "To Autumn" (in which "gathering swallows twitter" sadly before their seasonal flight south) and Stevens' "Sunday Morning," where at the end of the diurnal

cycle "casual flocks of pigeons make / Ambiguous undulations as they sink, / Downward to darkness, on extended wings." The poetic analogue to Ammons' "great birds" that springs first to mind, however, is Hopkins' "Windhover," in which the poet's "heart in hiding / stirred for a bird" that "Rebuffed the big wind" of circumstance. Flying north, against easy acceptance of the cycles of mortality, Ammons (with his mate), broke from his predetermined "patterns and routes" to "explore other patterns or better ways," but he has now returned to claim his roots and traditions.

Those traditions include the web of care and concern for kinfolk, and "neighbors"-including "Ann Pollard's pine" tree, "cracked off in high wind," that "ivy has / made . . . an ivy tree" (in "Neighbors," p. 27), the "clear-eyed / babies gumming french fries" in "Sunday at McDonald's" (p. 40), the "small white-headed man" who "unloads the wheelchair" into which he lovingly places his "wife, snow white" to roll her "through the hospital doors" in "Sweetened Change" (p. 41), a husband (the same one?) watching his wife sink into near-obliviousness in "Parting" (pp. 42-43); and the courageous "man whose cancer has / got him just to the point / he looks changed by a flight of stairs" but who "is like a rock / reversed"—"he shakes / in body only / his spirit a boulder of light" ("An Improvisation for the Stately Dwelling," pp. 47-48). The traditions Ammons reclaims also include allusions to the key images of earlier poets without embarrassed, self-conscious swervings or sweating agon to conform to critical theories, but with proper respect both for the greatness of the father-poets and for the integrity of his own poem. The most notable allusions of this type in A Coast of Trees are Ammons' adoption of symbolic birds to represent the poet. Besides employing the "great ... eagles" of "Easter Morning," he identifies himself with a "hermit lark" (pp. 16 and 45) to suggest both his isolation (à la Whitman's "hermit thrush") and his more-thannatural aspirations (à la Shelley's "sky-lark"), while maintaining the integrity of his own choice of specific characteristics and habitats-bare fields and shorelines—and migratory range.41 Ammons is no longer afraid of expressing either his affection for other people or his indebtedness to the poetic tradition that drew him beyond the limits of his native place.

Ammons' recent poetry, in A Coast of Trees, Worldly Hopes (1982), Lake Effect Country, and "The Ridge Farm" (both 1983), shows him giving up many of the quirks of style with which he screamed for attention in the volumes from Tape for the Turn of the Year through The Snow Poems. He has abandoned to some extent his idiosyncratic system

of (non)punctuation, now utilizing commas regularly and even introducing a few periods and an exclamation point and one query to mark the end of some poems. Moreover, he has (again with qualification for exceptions) regained the sense of decorum that he had, strangely, discarded during his mid-life phase. In the longer poems, such as "Easter Morning" and "The Ridge Farm," where he relies on what the Australian poet A. D. Hope has characterized as "the discursive mode," Ammons has returned to the style that needs to be cultivated in order to restore the ecology of poetry in the twentieth century. But he also revives a more gnomic and imagistic or symbolic mode. In short, Ammons is again using the English language, not as a toy or to illustrate theories, but as an expressive instrument over which he displays a total yet comfortable mastery.

Until we know the precise order in which Ammons' smaller poems were written, we cannot be sure that Worldly Hopes is not largely made up of occasional pieces written between the publication of Diversifications and The Snow Poems. 44 One poem that seems to be new is "Hermit Lark," which extends the analogy between the "sky bird" and Ammons:

... I learn my real

and ideal self from you, the right to sing alone without shame

* * * * *

I learn from you and lose the edginess I speak of to one other only, my mate, my long beloved, and make a shield . . .

* * * * * *

hard to find the bird in the song!

(p. 25)

"Hermit Lark" and an amusing analysis of "The Role of Society in the Artist" (pp. 21–22) are two of the more discursive poems in the volume, which contains many "briefings"—some of them Oriental moods-of-a-moment that seem just right without internal or terminal punctuation. Their forms, in fact, clearly reinforce the thematic message expressed by the words themselves. "Epistemology," for example, is left as fragmentary as the "bit-of-truth" one person tells another and its incompleteness is as irritating as "the bit / untold / avoided" that festers (p. 19). Ammons himself comments on this poetic development in "Progress Report":

Now I'm into things

so small when I

say boo I disappear

(p. 16)

But there is no suggestion here that the poet is being driven into a corner by society or by his own anxieties (as he was in "Lion::Mouse," *CP*, p. 203). Rather, the general sense conveyed by the recent publications is that the poet, having struggled for years to establish his "Worldly Hopes" and achieved most of those goals—now finds that "the toy life" (p. 49) he set out to grasp is not what he really values. Death, therefore, does not hold the same terrors as it did in the earlier poetry. In "Volitions," after a day of being turned "round and round" by "the wind," he asks the sky to "drive me / into the / ground here, / still me with the ground" (p. 45).

With a prolific poet like Ammons, now in the midst of a five-year MacArthur Fellowship, it is difficult to predict the scope or direction of his future work. But of his achievement to date there can be no doubt. A. R. Ammons has engaged the fundamental metaphysical and psychological issues of twentieth-century man-concerns about the relationships of the individual with the Universe and with his own familial and social roots-and he has shown us a way to triumph without relying on dogmatisms or on mere palliatives. Finally, after making peace with his father in The Snow Poems, he has made his peace with the inexorable and, possibly, inimical forces of "Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change," not by denying them or by pretending to outshout them, but by accepting them as being at least as significant as his own subjectivity. His clarity of perception and the courage of his acquiescence appear strikingly in "Rivulose," the final poem in Worldly Hopes: "You think the ridge hills . . . / hold on to you, if dreams / wander, give reality recurrence . . . / but then you realize" that, in terms of the span of geologic time:

not only are you not being held onto but where else could time do so well without you, what is your time where so much time is saved?

(p. 51)

VI.

In the Manhattan Review interview, which took place in late June 1980, four years after completing The Snow Poems and three years after he wrote "Easter Morning," Ammons told Philip Fried that he turned to the study of science partly because it provided "a pagan way of associating yourself with universals rather than with the coming and going of mortal things." He explained this by saying:

if you think of the pagan societies as rather carefully paying attention to what the natural forces were around them and then trying to identify with and, as it were, listen to what that force was and appease it, and know something about it, learn its

nature, then science does the same thing today.

It puts aside, for the moment, its personal interest in things and tries to know what is the nature of the thing out there. I regard that as a very high value. The humanities often feel opposed to that because that attitude obviously puts human things secondary, wheras the humanities have often claimed that man is the center of everything and has the right to destroy or build or do whatever he wishes. (p. 7)

Ammons' concern for the environment—"ecology" in the conventional sense—is clearest, perhaps, in "Extremes and Moderations," a poem that I have scanted as being written while Ammons was most influenced by the humanist critics. There he calls upon human beings to stop their pollution of space-ship Earth, if only for reasons of their own self-interest: "if contaminated water forces me to the extreme purification of bottled or distilled / water, the extreme will be costly" and (the final line of the poem) "in an enclosure like earth's there's no place to dump stuff off" (SLP, p. 66). But in returning to the "ecological naturalism" of the earlier volumes, Ammons' most recently published poems once again question even man's very capacity to desecrate nature. Whereas the humanist Robert Frost regretted that in the process of change, "Nothing gold can stay," Ammons reads the positive obverse of the coin in a poem entitled "Providence," which asserts that nothing tarnished can stay:

To stay
bright as
if just
thought of
earth requires
only that
nothing stay

(p. 46)

And, again, the closest poetic analogue is found in the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.: though "generations have trod" and "all is seared with trade,"

... for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—

We may never find A. R. Ammons adding to his title "Providence" Hopkins' conviction that the diurnal cycles move "Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings." 46 Yet, as we have observed in charting his development, he has brought his "ecological naturalism" to the point where its spirit approximates that of the supernaturalism of his childhood heritage, but with greater emphasis on the brotherhood of all creatures. Just as students of Spinoza can debate whether to describe him as an atheist or as the "God-intoxicated" philosopher, so we can finally discard all labels and realize that the poetry of A. R. Ammons provides us with a unique and important perspective and that, without attempting to provide easy answers, it conveys hopefulness and courage for the future of a world in which there is a central place for mankind just as long as human beings take their limitations and responsibilities as seriously as they do their volitions.

¹ The Manhattan Review, 1, no. 2 (Fall 1980), 20–21. (Available from Philip Fried, editor, 304 Third Avenue, Apt. 4A, New York, NY 10010.) For suggestions on preliminary reading for this essay, I am grateful to Jerald Bullis and John Benedict; for suggestions on the text of the essay itself, I thank Philip Fried, Jerald Bullis, and Andrew Kappel.

² Diacritics, 3 (Winter 1973), 51.

³ See Ammons' short autobiographical sketch in New York Times Book

Review, January 17, 1982, pp. 13 and 19.

⁴ For Ammons' comment on the "I/eye" pun see *Sphere: The Form of a Motion* (New York: Norton, 1974), 36:8. The full title of the first volume is OMMATEUM with DOXOLOGY. For a facsimile of the title page, see Stuart Wright, A. R. Ammons: A Bibliogaphy, 1954–1979 (Wake Forest University, 1980), p. 2 (hereafter cited as "Wright"). I quote the early poems from Ammons' Collected Poems, 1951–1971 (New York: Norton, 1972). This edition is hereafter cited as *CP*. Throughout this paper, Ammons' poetry is quoted by permission of the author and W. W. Norton & Company.

⁵ Given Ammons' interest in etymology, it may be significant that in He-

brew Ezra means "help."

⁶ Alastor, lines 23–29; see also "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," lines 49–54.

⁷ See Wright, pp. 104, 21; Northfield Poems (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966).

⁸ CP, pp. 23–24. When Ammons first reprinted this poem in Selected Poems (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1968), p. 22, he dropped the first stanza and the poem began—and was retitled—"I Set It My Task." In CP, however, he returned it to the original form it had in Ommateum. When I wrote to ask him about the poem, he replied on April 30, 1982: "I really like beginning with the imaginative action in stanza two, leaving out the preparatory speculations of stanza one—but then I began to think that formally or structurally the framing was necessary, its reverberation with the last stanza perhaps the best part."

⁹ "On a Future State," in Shelley, *Complete Works*, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, VI (London: Ernest Benn, and New York: Scribners, 1929).

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¹⁰ "The Sensitive Plant," *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers, 3rd printing corrected (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 218.

11 Byron, Complete Poetical Works, ed. Jerome J. McGann, II (Oxford:

Clarendon Press, 1980), 184-86.

¹² "The Garden of Proserpine," penultimate stanza, quoted from Swinburne, *The Collected Poetical Works* (London: Heinemann, 1917), I, 171.

13 "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day," quoted from A Hopkins

Reader, ed. John Pick (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), p. 27.

¹⁴ See Donald H. Reiman, "Keats and the Humanistic Paradox," Studies in English Literature, 11 (1971), 659–69, and "Wordsworth, Shelley, and the Romantic Inheritance," Romanticism Past and Present, 5, no. 2 (Dec. 1981), 1–22.

15 That earliest grouping, besides providing the contents of *Ommateum*, was drawn on for three poems in *Corsons Inlet* (1965), three in *Northfield Poems* (1966), one in *Uplands* (1970), and three in *Briefings* (1971). Of volumes published before *Collected Poems*, 1951–1971, only Expressions of Sea Level (1964) relied entirely on material later than 1955.

16 Ammons, Expressions of Sea Level (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press,

1964), pp. 3-7.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

18 Ammons had earlier, apparently, thought of building a long poem through accretion. "Ten Poems" that appeared in *The Hudson Review* issue of Autumn 1960 (13: 350–63) included six that were titled "Canto 1," "Canto 7," "Canto 8," "Canto 10," "Canto 12," and "Canto 17," respectively. In 1960 Ammons also published "Canto 13" in *Accent*, 20 (Autumn 1960), 199–200, and "Canto 24" and "Canto 29" appeared in *Impetus*, no. 7 (Spring 1963), pp. 15–18. Of these poems, "Canto 24" was never reprinted; the other eight, given new titles, reappeared in *Expressions of Sea Level*. See Wright, pp. 91–92, 95.

¹⁹ See the references to "my book" on 11 and 13 December, pages 39, 56.

²⁰ In Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition (Madison and Milwaukee: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965), Brian Wilkie demonstrated that literary history teaches the paradox that the epic poet's "partial repudiation of earlier epic tradition is itself traditional" (p. 10). See also Lewis, A Preface to "Paradise Lost" (1942; London: Oxford Univ. Press, Paper-back, 1960), pp. 13–32, and Donald H. Reiman, "Don Juan in Epic Context," Studies in Romanticism, 16 (1977), 587–94.

²¹ The days for which there is no record are 24 and 25 December, presumably dedicated to the celebration of Christmas, and 29 December, which (as he

tells on 30 December) he "gave to the memory of / William Carlos Williams" by attending a reception for Mrs. Williams in New York (p. 129).

²² John Van Sickle, "The Book-Roll and Some Conventions of the Poetic

Book," Arethusa, 13 (Spring 1980), 9.

²³ See Ulla E. Dydo, "How to Read Gertrude Stein: The Manuscript of 'Stanzas in Meditation'," *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*, 1 (New York: AMS Press, 1984), 271–303.

²⁴ W. D. Snodgrass, "A Poem's Becoming," in his volume of essays In

Radical Pursuit (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 52.

²⁵ Shelley, "On Love," Shelley's Poetry and Prose, ed. Reiman and Powers, p. 473.

²⁶ Ammons, Uplands: New Poems (New York: Norton, 1970), pp. 26-29;

first published in The Hudson Review, 21 (Spring 1968), 106-08.

²⁷ Uplands, p. 68, cf. pp. 58–59, 61–63. Ammons' use of "sphere" in "Summer Session 1968" develops the significance of the word beyond its rather limited or negative associations in Ammons' early poem entitled "Sphere" (written 1956–1960; first published in *Chelsea* [#14, January 1964, 51] and collected in *Northfield Poems* [1966], pp. 47–48). In that Freudian poem, "Sphere" is the womb, "A warm unity, separable but / entire, / you the nucleus / possessing that universe" (CP, pp. 97–98).

²⁸ Bloom was one of three members of the committee that chose Ammons' Collected Poems, 1951–1971 to receive the National Book Award for Poetry in

1973.

²⁹ Compare with Shelley's "Ode," these lines from *Sphere*: "history uprights, sways to the give and take in / a touchy balance . . .: / . . . fire . . . god / of a kind, traveling wave of the imagination . . . / that gives destruction's ash to the future," (# 148; p. 76). Ammons changes Shelley's image from unextinguished sparks lighting new fires to the fertilizing qualities of ashes and the room given in the burned-out area for future growth in the forest.

³⁰ These four poems have been collected, together with "Pray without Ceasing" (Ammons' sensitive reaction to the mid-life crisis of America, as exemplified by its free use of napalm on children in Viet Nam), in *Selected Longer Poems* (New York: Norton, 1980); this edition is hereafter cited as *SLP*.

³¹ In *The Snow Poems* (New York: Norton, 1977), there are two references, on pages 4 and 16, to the killing of hogs such as Ammons earlier had be-

moaned in "Hardweed Path Going" (CP, pp. 66-68).

32 "My Father Used to Bring Banana," The Snow Poems, p. 12.

³³ Pp. 30–31. Ammons' use of the vertical gloss as subtext seems, like other technical innovations in *The Snow Poems*, to grow out of his interest in the experimental poetry of John Ashbery and, possibly, in the criticism of Derrida and the French deconstructionists.

34 "My Father Used to Tell of An," The Snow Poems, p. 229.

³⁵ In his notes to the first draft of this paper, Jerald Bullis wrote: "This is literally true. His father's legs were amputated during the final stages of the diabetic illness that killed him. See 'The Run-Through' (*CP*, pp. 285–286) and 'Motioning' in *Lake Effect Country*, which will be published by Norton." The latter poem appears on pp. 44–45 of *Lake Effect Country* (New York: Norton, 1983).

³⁶ Stein first quoted this sentence from *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* by her teacher Josiah Royce in "Saving the Sentence," part of Stein's *How to Write* (Paris: Plain Edition, 1931), p. 19. (I am grateful to Professor Ulla E. Dydo for this information.)

³⁷ "I'm the Type," pp. 234-36.

³⁸ For this poem, see Wright, p. 59; for *Highgate Road*, see Wright, pp. 61-62.

³⁹ Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, III, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 261.

⁴⁰ Helen Vendler, New Republic, 25 Apr. 1981, pp. 28-32.

⁴¹ One interesting sidelight of this choice (given Ammons' care as a student of nature) is that, since the meadowlark is not a true lark but a type of blackbird, the reference is to the only true lark in the Western Hemisphere—the horned or shore lark (a relative of the European skylark), which has a migratory range that includes North Carolina only in winter, but New Jersey and New York all year long.

⁴² Apparent exceptions are a poem in *Worldly Hopes: Poems* (New York: Norton, 1982), entitled "Shit List" (pp. 27–29), and section 15 of "The Ridge Farm" (*Hudson Review*, 36 [Spring 1983], 83). The first, however, maintains its own low style, while the passage on "shit" in "The Ridge Farm" is so elemental and earthy in its thought that to use any but the plain term would falsify the tone. Neither of these uses produces the shock effect exploited in passages of "Essay on Poetics" (*SLP*, p. 47), "Extremes and Moderations" (*SLP*, p. 57), or those I have already alluded to in *Sphere* and *The Snow Poems*.

⁴³ See "The Discursive Mode: Reflections on the Ecology of Poetry," in Hope's *The Cave and the Spring: Essays on Poetry* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press,

1970), pp. 1-9.

⁴⁴ Only eight of the forty-three poems in Worldly Hopes had appeared in print by the fall of 1979, the terminus ad quem of Stuart Wright's A. R. Ammons: A Bibliography.

45 "Easter Morning" was written, Jerald Bullis tells me, in April 1977. It

was first published in Poetry, 134 (April 1979), 1-4 (Wright, p. 134).

⁴⁶ The concluding two lines of Hopkins' sonnet entitled "God's Grandeur" (A Hopkins Reader, p. 13).

Robert Lowell and Hopkins

STEVEN GOULD AXELROD

Although never examined in detail, a relationship between Robert Lowell's poetry and that of Gerard Manley Hopkins has been intimated with sufficient frequency to earn the status of critical commonplace. To many of Lowell's early reviewers, the comparison seemed almost selfevident. Austin Warren, for example, called Hopkins, Dylan Thomas, John Wheelwright, and Allen Tate the young poet's "summonable congeners," though adding the sensible caveat that "probably Lowell can't imitate docilely even when he wishes."1 Later scholars have reinvoked the comparison regularly. Richard Fein writes that Lowell's initial work "showed the influence of John Donne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Dylan Thomas, and Jonathan Edwards," along with that of the New Critics. Phillip Cooper asserts that Lowell's first volumes "are full of poems in which Dylan Thomas, Hopkins, and even Milton would feel at home." Jay Martin calls Hopkins a "conscious" model for the outsetting poet. And Jerome Mazzaro sees Hopkins as a religious as well as poetic influence: "Before a reader can do justice to Robert Lowell's poetry the particular view he holds as poet and Catholic should be defined. This view, for the most part, derives from such sources as James Joyce, Gerard Manley Hopkins, T. S. Eliot, St. Ignatius, Dante, and St. Bernard of Clairvaux."2

What we know of Lowell's biography reinforces our critical intuition that Hopkins played an important role in his development. Lowell has explained that at St. Mark's School, Richard Eberhart introduced him to poetry by reading aloud from "Baudelaire and Shakespeare and Hopkins—it made the thing living." Later, at Kenyon College, he avidly read the New Critics, who were in the process of reviving Hopkins' reputation. They argued that Hopkins had "transcended Victorianism" to become an apostle or precursor of modernism. Un-

doubtedly reflecting the impact of I. A. Richards' pioneering studies as well as subsequent essays by William Empson, Herbert Read, F. R. Leavis, and R. P. Blackmur, Lowell copied several Hopkins poems into his notebooks for inspiration and perhaps emulation: "No Worst, There Is None," "Spring," "Spring and Fall," and the title of "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe."⁵

After graduation, he converted to Roman Catholicism, married fellow-Catholic Jean Stafford, and spent a year in Baton Rouge where "Catholicism was in the air." The atmosphere there fortified his interest in the poet-priest. According to his biographer, Lowell read intently in Hopkins as well as Pascal, Newman, Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, and E. I. Watkin. In her story "An Influx of Poets," Jean Stafford describes "Theron," a character she modeled closely on her first husband, as being "immersed in the rhythms of Gerard Manley Hopkins the poet, [and] explosively ignited by Gerard Manley Hopkins the Jesuit." Another observer remembers Lowell discussing and reciting Hopkins at all hours of the day. At about this same time, in the mid-1940s, Lowell published two critical essays on Hopkins. He also began publishing the Hopkins-influenced poems that were to make him famous.

If we can hardly avoid sensing the impact Hopkins had on Lowell's early work, it is equally difficult to avoid sensing that the impact eventually vanished. As Lowell forsook his faith and moved away from his New Critical, neo-symbolist origins, he left Hopkins behind. This essay examines the shape and texture of Hopkins' influence—the undocility of Lowell's "imitation" and the rebelliousness of his eventual renunciation. If Hopkins had an important effect on Lowell's development, we should have a particular knowledge of what that effect actually amounted to, how it manifested itself in individual poems, and what form its deliquescence ultimately took.

In the effort to chart Hopkins' influence on Lowell, I recognize that Harold Bloom, the great contemporary theoretician of literary influence, functions as an almost inevitable "summonable congener." His seminal studies, 10 however, have proved more valuable as inspiration than practical guide. His "six revisionary ratios" by which a poet "misreads" or revises his predecessor are not adequate for an analysis of the Lowell-Hopkins relationship. Positing that a precursor becomes absorbed into the ephebe's poetic id rather than ego, Bloom designed his ratios to describe relationships that do not necessarily manifest themselves in verbal echoes. But I believe, to adopt Bloom's Freudian metaphor, that Hopkins resided in Lowell's supergo rather than id,

functioning as only a temporary ego-ideal. Surface resemblances, therefore, assume a larger significance than Bloom's system allows. In one of his most recent works, Bloom has proposed a "transumptive criticism" which would study the way particular tropes alter in a poetic succession. Since this approach would focus on observable verbal features, it better fits the Lowell-Hopkins relationship, and in this study I have tried to demonstrate the way it might work.

As I have suggested, Hopkins played an important role in Lowell's initial emergence as a major poet. I would divide this period into three stages, only one of which corresponds directly to Bloom's "revisionary ratios." The first stage of the writer who absorbs his precursor into his superego rather than his id I would label *imitation*. Imitation, in the sense I wish to identify, typically occurs before Bloom's ratios come into play, during what he calls a "poet's flooded apprenticeship, before his strength [begins] to assert itself." In this stage the young poet does not anxiously "misread" his precursor but straightforwardly echoes him. Lowell himself used the Drydenesque term "imitation" to designate creative translation from one language to another. I use it here to designate translation from one English-language poet to another.

The second stage equates more directly to Bloom's concept of revision, especially to his initial pair of ratios, clinamen (misprision proper) and tessera (antithetical completion of the precursor). The young poet, now separating himself from the precursor, reverses key tropes in the precursor's work in an effort to establish his own voice. The last stage is parody, a revision even more rebellious than clinamen and tessera. The poet finally seeks to free his poetry from the bonds of influence through a mastery of a style that dismisses the style. Although Bloom does on one occasion use "parody" in the context of influence, I have drawn this term from Leslie Fiedler's discussion of influence in the American tradition: "The fruitful relationship of the American writer to the past . . . is that of parody. . . . American writers [know] that to be free to 'make it new' they must destroy the most recent old man, however dearly loved."14 In brief, my thesis is that Lowell ceased to imitate Hopkins almost as soon as he had begun; spent some years powerfully revising Hopkins' tropes; and ultimately liberated himself from his great precursor by parodying him.

In his practical criticism, Bloom has refused to grant either Lowell or Hopkins serious consideration. He has interred Lowell as "anything but a permanent poet . . . mostly a maker of period pieces." Since Bloom prefers vision to self-irony, and since his method depends on isolating what he calls the "poet-in-a-poet" from the "person-in-a-poet,"

he may have been disenchanted by the ironic and autobiographical emphases of Lowell's later work, beginning with *Life Studies* in 1959. There is no way of easily accounting for his vituperation of the unlucky Hopkins, however. He has scorned the poet-priest's "strained intensities and convolutions of diction," and has derogated him as "over-praised by modern critics," "a representative Victorian gentleman," a repressed homosexual, a "nationalistic jingo," a "self-torturer," an "incurably Romantic sensibility desperately striving not to be Romantic," a poet whose only achievement was "to have made Keatsian poetry into a devotional mode, however strained," a man of commonplace and "obvious" poetic ideas, an innovator only in a "technical" sense, and a failure. The rest is silence, which given the nature of the evaluation is surely just as well.

Bloom's blindness to these two poets only leaves for others the task of putting their relationship in focus. Lowell clearly absorbed Hopkins into his youthful quest for a writing identity. The Jesuit priest's mastery of language and symbol, his classicism, and his faith all inevitably called to the struggling young poet, who was himself transfixed with modernist poetics, with the classics (in which he majored at Kenyon), and with Roman Catholicism. Yet there were some tense disjunctures as well. Hopkins wrote small, introspective, perfected lyrics, whereas Lowell was driven toward a ragged, rebellious, and public grandeur. Hopkins wrote in praise of God, whereas Lowell felt a powerful urge to excoriate his fellow human beings and himself.

Some of the story that follows could undoubtedly be told in terms of Lowell's temporary allegiance to the Roman Catholic church. But such a telling would distort the poetry. Lowell's life struggle was to be a writer, not a believer. Although Hopkins and Catholicism were certainly overlapping concepts in his mind during his apprentice years, I believe that poetic language was always central and Catholic faith secondary to his concern as a poet. As he once commented, "The poem tries to be a poem and not a piece of artless testimony. . . . There is a question whether my poems are religious, or whether they just use religious imagery." He implies that his faith, by giving him a pretext for writing, may have served his poetry primarily as a means to overcome writer's block. Thus we best gauge the swings in Lowell's career in the context of specifically literary relationships; and Hopkins is the literary figure who most notably combined an innovative and admired poetics with a Christian thematics.

Although the early poem "Rebellion" may not appear especially Hopkinsian, it actually represents Lowell's first attempt to imitate his precursor. Near the beginning of Lowell's youthful notebook, in which he scattered quotations of favorite poems among his own creative efforts, he copied in the text of Hopkins' "No Worst, There Is None." Immediately thereafter, he wrote the earliest known drafts of "Rebellion." This poem, based on a violent quarrel he had had with his father, dramatizes a son's aggression. Critics, myself included, have usually concerned themselves with what they infer to be the autobiographical content, but that is to read the poem anachronistically, as if it were one of Lowell's later works. (Compare it to "Father" in *History* [1973], which is an autobiographical poem based on the same incident.) In truth, "Rebellion" is essentially figural rather than representational. It rewrites the myths of Oedipus, Cain, and Job into an interwoven trope for revolt and suffering. The rebellion of the poem may implicitly be directed against Lowell's poetic patrimony: the poems he so dutifully copied into his notebooks and the myths he chose to rewrite.

The first draft of "Rebellion" reads in its entirety:

Where was all honor, captain, when the mock French-windows slammed and you fell backwards, crammed Against the heir-looms, screen, a glass-cased clock And mother's cracked Italian chest; when you damned Heaven and earth for giving you a son? Honor was at the bottom of the sea Hiding away from a destroying son.

A second, longer draft adds that the son,
... worse than prodigal, shall bear
The sacred stigma of Cain's brotherhood,
Renounce the earth's face and the face of God.

Why did Lowell juxtapose drafts of *this* poem with "No Worst, There Is None"? The answer may be that the inwardness of Hopkins' text corresponded to a code that Lowell wished to establish in his own poem but which was initially absent. (And conversely, his drafts may have been intended to fill an absence in Hopkins' poem as well.) Lowell's fragments form a stark dialectic with Hopkins' sonnet:

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief, More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring. Comforter, where, where is your comforting? Mary, mother of us, where is your relief? My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chiefwoe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing—Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked "No lingering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief." O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall

Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep, Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.¹⁹

Lowell's completed poem, however, managed to incorporate the dialectic. As published in *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946), it focuses less on the patricide itself than on the son's guilty conscience:

There was rebellion, father, when the mock French windows slammed and you hove backward, rammed Into your heirlooms, screens, a glass-cased clock, The highboy quaking to its toes. You damned My arm that cast your house upon your head And broke the chimney flintlock on your skull. Last night the moon was full: I dreamed the dead Caught at my knees and fell; And it was well With me, my father, Then Behemoth and Leviathan Devoured our mighty merchants. None could arm Or put to sea. O father, on my farm I added field to field And I have sealed An everlasting pact With Dives to contract The world that spreads in pain; But the world spread When the clubbed flintlock broke my father's brain.20

In "No Worst, There Is None," the mind "has mountains; cliffs of fall / Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed." In the finished "Rebellion," the mental world similarly "spreads in pain." The poem finally succeeds in imitating Hopkins' trope of psychic anguish.

As "Rebellion" moved through its drafts, the figure of the boy underwent a transformation from an active murderous Cain to a haunted, comfortless Job. The published poem omits the second draft's reference to Cain (though the poem that precedes it in *Lord Weary's Castle* contains one), and it adds a *Job* allusion: "Behemoth and Leviathan." Lowell must have read "No Worst, There Is None" as a misprision of the book of *Job*, just as he read his own developing poem as a misprision of the Cain and Abel myth. While his initial drafts were seemingly antithetical to the Hopkins sonnet, his final poem swallowed both it and the drafts whole. "Rebellion" thus creates its bleak, neces-

saritarian moral landscape—in which a Hopkins-like "Fury" not only "shrieks" but acts, and then begs its unforgiving self for forgiveness—by playing *Job* against *Genesis*, and Hopkins against its own earlier drafts.

In this and in his other early poems, Lowell condensed the common pattern of poets who have modeled upon a predecessor and then must extricate themselves from the influence. Lowell began his process of revising Hopkins almost immediately. For example, after quoting Hopkins' "Spring" in his notebook, he paraphrased it antithetically in "Where the Rainbow Ends." Whereas the octet of "Spring" delights in the spring sky's "descending blue," Lowell's poem evokes a fallen urban world:

In Lowell's text, the sky is defiantly *not* blue—a declaration of difference, though hardly of independence, from the precursor. In a similar spirit, "Colloquy in Black Rock" parallels "The Windhover" in detail while reversing it in tone.²²

The transformation of imitation into revision appears most plainly in the major poem of Lowell's early period, "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket." But before we look directly at that poem, let us consider the two essays Lowell wrote about Hopkins at this time for what they might reveal about his poetic motives and practice. "Hopkins and Baudelaire" is a withering review of Eleanor Ruggles' Life of Hopkins, together with a positive evaluation of Joseph Bennett's Baudelaire: A Criticism.23 This essay suggests that Lowell was deeply marked by hearing Eberhart read both poets aloud to him at a formative moment in his development and that, moreover, he implicitly accepted T. S. Eliot's linking of the two as essentially Christian poets (in "Religion and Literature"). Perhaps Lowell unconsciously regarded Hopkins, with his compressed, intense rhetoric, and Baudelaire, with his more liberated personal voice, as parallel but also contrastive models of the kind of poet he himself might eventually become. Possibly Baudelaire seemed the more attractive alternative. Nevertheless, if we translate Hopkins and Baudelaire into the American poets with which each was associated, Whitman and Poe, and then translate that pair into their twentieth-century equivalents, William Carlos Williams and Allen Tate, we notice that the poets have undergone a chiasmic reversal of roles. If Hopkins and Baudelaire functioned as opposed ego-ideals, each nevertheless seemed to contain elements of the other.

Lowell's other essay on Hopkins, entitled simply "A Note," implies even more about Lowell's relationship to his precursor.24 This article reveals a deep ambivalence. It praises Hopkins' "heroic sanctity" while mocking his "strict fastidiousness." The larger part of the article particularizes four "faults" in the poetry. Lowell claims that Hopkins "knew nature but he did not know too much about people I have never altogether liked his nuns and sailors in The Wreck of the Deutschland." He also objects that Hopkins' rhythms are "hyperthyroid"; that his lines occasionally collapse in styleless exuberance; and that his work suffers from "awkwardness, obscurity and syntactical violence." The odd thing about these "faults" is that they are all characteristic of Lowell's own early poetry. "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" has no realized people in it at all. Its rhythms are hyperthyroid and exuberant, and its syntax frequently obscure and violent. Lowell seems to have projected his apprehension about the faults of his own work on to his sanctified precursor. At the same time, he projected his unconscious desires for his work on to Hopkins as well, lauding him, with questionable appropriateness, as a "personal" and "substantially active" poet.

Thus Lowell painted a double portrait in "A Note": of a "good Hopkins" who was an image of the personal, engaged poet Lowell wished to be (and would eventually become), and a "bad Hopkins" who was an image of the solipsistic, awkward poet he feared himself to be. His quest to dominate the historical Hopkins in such a way suggests the anxiety this father-figure must have provoked in him. The degree to which he identified himself with Hopkins must have deeply troubled him as he wrote his own Catholic sea elegy, which at once imitated, challenged, and defied its most famous precursor. This troubled sense undoubtedly helped to produce the poem, but it inhibited Lowell's further development. He ultimately proved capable of advancing only by discarding his sense of identification with the "bad Hopkins" and becoming himself the image of his largely fantasized "good Hopkins."

Bloom argues that "the primal scene of instruction," in which the young poet finds his vocation, usually occurs beside the ocean or within the sound of water—the "Sea of Poetry." So it is with Lowell's "The Quaker Graveyard," though the poem envisions that sea as being more destructive than instructive. In his symbolic birth as a poet, Lowell actualizes his gift by testing it against a wide variety of literary works about the sea. Although we will focus our attention on the poem's relations to Hopkins, we should acknowledge its range of reference. Beyond its many allusions to Melville's *Moby-Dick* and Thoreau's *Cape*

Cod, "The Quaker Graveyard" challenges and alters a rich tradition of "American seashore odes," including Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," Crane's "Voyages" and "At Melville's Tomb," and Eliot's "The Dry Salvages." At the same time, the poem also demands to be considered in terms of the English elegy, from "Lycidas" through "Adonais" to "The Wreck of the Deutschland." Lowell sought to establish his own strength by contesting the strongest writers of both Britain and America, and misshaping two strong literary genres. These genres, the seashore ode and the elegy, came together in Hopkins' great poem, making it an almost inevitable major precursor. 26

"The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" imitates "The Wreck of the Deutschland" in several evident ways.²⁷ Both works elegize persons lost at sea who were not well known to the author: Hopkins' poem commemorates five Franciscan nuns whose drowning he had read about, Lowell's memorializes the death of a cousin he knew only casually. Both works praise God while lambasting centers of secular power: Germany in Hopkins' poem, in Lowell's, all governments involved in the Second World War. Both works express the "immediacy and intensity" of the

religious life to which their authors had converted.

Additionally, the two poems embody ambitious attempts by young men at the start of their writing careers to establish their authority over the word and over poetic tradition. In Lowell's poem, the many literary allusions, the parade of unanswered questions and unrevealed secrets (II.4-5; III.1-2, 12, 18-19; V.4-5; VI.17-19; VII.17), and such phrases as "Orphean lute" (I.23), "fabled news" (III.17), and "it goes / Past castled Sion" (VI.17-18) all indicate that writing and the limits of representation are at issue, at least in the poem's subtext. Like its precursor, "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" tests not only faith but language as well. Both poems exemplify the "vigorous metaphor, the incorporation of the difficult and unpoetic, and the use of dramatic shifts of tone" that Cleanth Brooks has ascribed to Hopkins' style.29 Both poems move away from the conventions of representational language toward auto-referentiality (a more innovative gesture in Hopkins than in Lowell, who wrote in the shadow of Hopkins, symbolisme, and modernism). The poems emphasize their self-referentiality by calling attention to themselves as linguistic constructions.30

We cannot avoid noticing the poems' remarkably thick verbal textures, composed of distorted and extended syntactical structures, stressed rhythms, nonlogical sequencing, and highlighted metaphors. A juxtaposition of passages reveals some of this resemblance, though it also makes clear that Lowell, for all his rhetorical concentration, never

went as far as Hopkins. He curtailed Hopkins' endowment in order to discover a related strength of his own:

He was pitched to his death at a blow,
For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew:
They could tell him for hours, dandled the to and fro
Through the cobbled foam-fleece. What could he do
With the burl of the fountains of air, buck and the flood
of the wave?
(WD, 16.4-8)

... The drowned sailor clutched the drag-net. Light Flashed from his matted head and marble feet, He grappled at the net With the coiled, hurdling muscles of his thighs:

The corpse was bloodless, a botch of reds and whites.

(QG, I.4–8)³¹

If Lowell's syntax is less remarkable than Hopkins', his imagery is perhaps more (compare "coiled hurdling muscles" to "braids of thew").

As if to emphasize its Hopkins connection, "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" makes several brief allusions to Hopkins' works. For example, the speaker mentions "dreadnaughts" who must learn to acknowledge the sea's power (I.18), an echo of the sailor with the "dreadnought breast" in "The Wreck." He later uses "fable" as a verb (III.17), as does Hopkins (6.8). He asserts the inability of any "Orphean lute" to pluck life back (I.23), a possible reference to "The Loss of the Eurydice." And he refers to "IS, the whited monster" (III.18), an evident turn on Hopkins' famous assertion, "What Christ is / . . . Is immortal diamond." ³²

This last transumption suggests the crucial difference between the two poets, the essential misprision that Lowell's text enacts upon its precursor. Whereas the "I AM THAT I AM" of Exodus (3.14) is unambiguously "immortal diamond" for Hopkins, he is quite ambiguously a "whited monster" for Lowell. "The Quaker Graveyard" may share with "the Wreck of the Deutschland" its sense of human evil and divine retribution, but whereas Hopkins' elegy exhibits pity for humankind and reverence for Christ, Lowell's elegy implies that human beings are irredeemable and divinity unforgiving. And whereas Hopkins' poem instresses the poet's self-doubt, Lowell's retains an implacable impersonality. "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" is ultimately less a reflection of faith than an assault on the world, and an undermining of all cognitive paradigms, even (or especially) the ones that seem poten-

tially redemptive. Whereas Hopkins' poem evokes a "God . . . that heeds" (32.7–8) and a "mercy that outrides / The all of water" (33.1–2), Lowell's concludes with a furious vision of human beings finally beyond the pale of God's concern. No "Christ of the Father compassionate" (33.8) comes to fetch *Lowell's* faithful. Rather:

You could cut the brackish winds with a knife
Here in Nantucket, and cast up the time
When the Lord God formed man from the sea's slime
And breathed into his face the breath of life,
And blue-lunged combers lumbered to the kill.
The Lord survives the rainbow of His will.

(VII. 12–17)

We are left with the image of a Father coolly washing his hands of a bad investment, writing his children out of his will.

In this conclusion we have an obvious break not only from "The Wreck of the Deutschland" but from the very elements of anagnorsis and peripeteia integral to the elegiac genre. Rather than expressing love, sorrow, and doubts resolved, Lowell's poem expresses bewilderment and rage. In his attempt to sever his ties to Hopkins, he breaks the vessel of the elegy. Defying the sea of poetry, he proclaims: "This is the end of the whaleroad" (IV.1). The contradictions of "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" derive at least as much from Lowell's combat with Hopkins as from his crisis of faith. In order to come to birth as a poet, Lowell needed to silence or weaken his predecessor. Slamming Melville's agnosticism up against Hopkins' Roman Catholicism, he produced a blasphemous Catholic poem powerful for its creative disorder, and powerful also for its struggle to make a place for itself by answering and defeating the voices of the dead.

In the years following Lord Weary's Castle, Lowell escaped Hopkins' influence entirely, thus making his own continued development possible. Michael Sprinker has argued that while "The Wreck of the Deutschland" marked Hopkins' attainment of a mature, strong poetry, its very "strength and originality inhibited each subsequent composition." The arc of Hopkins' career, Sprinker asserts, is a "curve of diminishing magnitude . . . culminating in the severe askesis of the late poems which depict the ebbing and ultimate loss of the poet's creative power." We may speculate that, up to a certain point, a similar phenomenon occurred in Lowell's career. Certainly after the publication of "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" in 1946, the arc of Lowell's poetry descended for over a decade, from the self-curtailment of The Mills of the Kavanaughs (1951) to years of silence.

Lowell broke his silence in 1957 by composing the first of his "Life Studies" poems, "Skunk Hour." In this poem he discovered a new poetic voice—syntactically undistorted, prosodically subtle, deceptively close to ordinary language and to speech. He created an art that conceals rather than advertises itself, an art unanchored in classical myth or religious doctrine, and an art not in awe of his past achievement but defiant of it. If "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," like "The Wreck of the Deutschland," represented the birth of a poet, "Skunk Hour" represented a poetic rebirth. This revival in itself distinguished Lowell from his precursor, who proved unable to transform his own "winter world." "34"

"Skunk Hour," which is significantly a climactic crisis poem, dramatically demonstrates Lowell's effort to disaffiliate himself from Hopkins. The poem's revelation of personal desolation—"I myself am hell / Nobody's here"—seems, at least thematically, to recall "Carrion Comfort" and the terrible sonnets. But in fact the relation is one of tessera, or antithetical completion. Lowell so reads "the parent-poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense." Whereas Hopkins' abysmal poetry presents itself as but a stage in a traditional Christian journey, Lowell's signals a departure from all stabilizing systems. Since Hopkins' terrible sonnets dramatize the impossibility of a faithless existence, they implicitly praise Christ. In a metalepsis, "Skunk Hour" explores the dark night of the soul with absurd humor, implicitly praising the power of a human being to endure his incomprehensible aloneness.

Instead of textualizing a self within a Roman Catholic framework, then, "Skunk Hour" opens itself to secular incoherence. In a similar way, it disposes of a poetic framework: "Nobody's here," not even Hopkins. This claim, though undoubtedly false, reflects the characteristically American trope of Adamic freedom from the past, including the pastness of rhetoric.³⁷ "The poem's qualities of arbitrariness, contingency, relativity, incongruity, and surprise emerge fully when contrasted to the solider, more rooted definitions of Hopkins' sonnets. In seeming to echo yet in not really echoing Hopkins, Lowell both acknowledges and displaces his precursor.

Lowell's final reference to Hopkins occurs in the initial version of "For John Berryman," published in 1969.³⁸ He includes the poet in a list of admired prophet-heroes who died young:

... How merrily they gallop to catch the ocean—Hopkins, Herbert, Thoreau, born to die like the athletes at early fortyBut in the revised version of the poem, published the next year,39

Hopkins is out and Pascal has taken his place.

This gesture of rejection reflects the import of Lowell's last major transumption of Hopkins' imagery, which occurs in "Night Sweat," a crisis poem published in 1964.⁴⁰ We may speculate that when Lowell, in his early life as a poet, absorbed Hopkins into his poetic superego, he felt a moral anxiety at the gap between his own somewhat chaotic creative instincts and the values sanctioned by his admired, and potentially punishing, precursor. Hence, the tensions of a poem like "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket." In "Night Sweat," however, Lowell brought his conflicted relationship with Hopkins to full awareness, and separated himself from his precursor through deliberate, almost satiric allusion. Confirming his achievement of poetic adulthood, he felt ready to give Hopkins up.

The first sonnet of "Night Sweat" recaptiulates the Lowellian

theme of anguish:

Sweet salt embalms me and my head is wet, everything streams and tells me this is right; my life's fever soaking in night sweat—one life, one writing! . . .

one universe, one body . . . in this urn the animal night sweats of the spirit burn (8–9, 13–14)

Beyond transmuting Yvor Winters' figure of "a single urn" in which a married couple becomes "a single spirit," these lines evoke the trope of night sweat present in three poems of mental torment that Lowell knew well. The primary poem is Hopkins' sonnet "I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day":

What hours, O what black hours we have spent This night! What sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!

Self yeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see The lost are like this, and their scourge to be As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.⁴²

The others are Yeats's "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" ("the night can sweat with terror") and Roethke's "In a Dark Time" ("I know the purity of pure despair, / My shadow pinned against a sweating wall"). Lowell places the trope in a context of artistic incapacity indicated through imagery of sexual impotence: "My stalled equipment, the old broom." (Edward Said has argued that Hopkins, even above other

poets, characteristically confused sexual energy and writing.⁴⁴) Lowell's sonnet seems to be enacting the imagination's momentary defeat by the inhibiting presences that have haunted it—poets such as Hopkins as well as Winters, Yeats, and Roethke.

The second and final sonnet of "Night Sweat," however, transforms this symbolic sexual incapacity into sexual fulfillment; and with this change, estrangement turns to familiarity, and pathos to a kind of comedy. Whereas Hopkins can "feel" only "the fell of dark, not day," Lowell waits long enough to "feel" the returning "light." (His manuscript title for this sonnet was "Day," a reversal of Hopkins' "Dark, Not Day.") Lowell frees himself from the grasp of predecessors, particularly Hopkins, by treating them with something close to mockery:

Behind me! You! Again I feel the light lighten my leaded eyelids, while the gray skulled horses whinny for the soot of night. I dabble in the dapple of the day, a heap of wet clothes, seamy, shivering, I see my flesh and bedding washed with light, my child exploding into dynamite, my wife . . . your lightness alters everything, and tears the black web from the spider's sack, as your heart hops and flutters like a hare. Poor turtle, tortoise, if I cannot clear the surface of these troubled waters here, absolve me, help me, Dear Heart, as you bear this world's dead weight and cycle on your back.

The key word here, for our purposes, is "dapple," a word that bears Hopkins' indelible imprint. In his rhetoric of celebration, Hopkins always used the term in a context that united earthly changing beauty with divine eternal beauty. "Glory be to God for dappled things," from "Pied Beauty," 45 is only the most memorable example. But in contrast to the speaker of "Pied Beauty," or the speaker of "The Windhover," whose heart "stirred" for the "dapple-dawn-drawn" bird,46 Lowell's speaker merely wants to "dabble in the dapple of the day"-a day that contains no sacrament, that inspires no stirring but only idle dabbling. Lowell's later poetic world is brooded over by no Holy Ghost, inhabited by no "brute beauty and valour and act," marked by no ordering correspondence. It is a world of randomness and humor: whinnying horses, crying babies, and a rescuing wife who is compared to a hare, a turtle, and a tortoise. In the encounter with death-the first sonnet speaks of the "will to die"-"Night Sweat" clings to tolerant and amused domestic relations as to a lifeline, ultimately

smiling at the self's solipsisms, and parodying Hopkins' Christology and style. If "Influence is *Influenza*," Lowell cured himself by transforming the style of parody.

ing the anxiety of influence into the aggression of parody.

We understand a poet's language through its difference from other languages, and that fact underlies Lowell's use, or misuse, of Hopkins' "dapple." In his willingness to "dabble in the dapple," Lowell may seem only to trivialize Hopkins. But he means to suggest the limitations of Hopkins' rhetoric compared to his own less factitious rhetoric which cuts closer to the bone of contemporary life and individual experience. In the second sonnet of "Night Sweat," Lowell did not summon Hopkins to model on or struggle with, as he had done formerly, but to dismiss. Hopkins was a forefather who no longer fathered forth. In his last transumption of a Hopkinsian trope, Lowell made his predecessor the butt of a liberating literary joke.

¹ Austin Warren, "A Double Discipline," *Poetry*, 70 (Aug. 1947), 264. Other reviewers who compared Lowell to Hopkins include John Berryman, "Thomas, Lowell, Etc.," *Partisan Review*, 14 (Jan.–Feb. 1947), 73; Katherine Brégy, Review of *Lord Weary's Castle, The Catholic World*, 164 (Jan. 1947), 374; Richard Eberhart, "Four Poets," *Sewanee Review*, 55 (Spring 1947), 330–31; Randall Jarrell, "Poetry in War and Peace," *Partisan Review*, 12 (Winter 1945), 124; T. H. Jones, "The Poetry of Robert Lowell," *The Month*, n.s. 9 (Mar. 1953), 133, 134, 137, 140; Walter McElroy, Review of *Lord Weary's Castle, Chimera*, 5 (Autumn 1946), 59; and Ray B. West, "The Tiger in the Wood: Five Contemporary Poets," *Western Review*, 16 (Autumn 1951), 78. Although they make the comparison, both Jarrell and Berryman downplay its significance.

² Richard Fein, Robert Lowell (New York: Twayne, 1970), p. 3 (see also pp. 16, 22, 64); Phillip Cooper, The Autobiographical Myth of Robert Lowell (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 4; Jay Martin, Robert Lowell (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1970), p. 10; Jerome Mazzaro, The Poetic Themes of Robert Lowell (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 1.

³ Frederick Seidel, "Robert Lowell" (interview), *Paris Review*, 25 (Winter-Spring 1961); rpt. *Robert Lowell: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Thomas Parkinson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 15.

⁴ Cleanth Brooks, Modern Poetry and the Tradition (1939; rpt. New York:

Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 241.

⁵ Lowell Manuscripts Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University. The New Critical essays in question are: I. A. Richards, "Gerard Hopkins," Dial, No. 131 (Sept. 1926), 195–203, and Practical Criticism (London: Kegan Paul, 1929), pp. 80–89; William Empson, The Seven Types of Ambiguity (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), pp. 284–86; Herbert Read, "Gerard Manley Hopkins," Criterion, 10 (Apr. 1931), 552–59, and "The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins," English Critical Essays, Twentieth Century (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1933), pp. 351–74; F. R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), pp. 159–93; and R. P. Blackmur, "Mature Intelligence of an Artist," Kenyon Review, 1 (Winter 1939), 96–99. Although critical of Hop-

kins' "obscurity," Lowell's mentor Allen Tate also thought of Hopkins as a major poet, including him in the company of such moderns as Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens (see Tate, Essays of Four Decades [New York, William Morrow, 1968], pp. 153, 167, 196). For a general discussion of the New Critics' influence on Lowell as well as his habit of copying favorite poems into his notebook, see S. G. Axelrod, Robert Lowell: Life and Art (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 28, 30–35, 245–46.

⁶ Peter Taylor, quoted in Ian Hamilton, Robert Lowell: A Biography (New

York: Random House, 1982), p. 78.

7 Ibid.

8 Jean Stafford, "An Influx of Poets," New Yorker, 6 Nov. 1978, p. 49.

⁹ Eileen Simpson, Poets in Their Youth: A Memoir (New York: Random

House, 1982), pp. 132, 135.

¹⁰ These are The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973); A Map of Misreading (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975); and Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976).

11 Harold Bloom, The Breaking of the Vessels (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago

Press, 1982).

12 Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence, p. 16.

13 Lowell used the term in *Imitations*, deliberately echoing John Dryden's definition (Lowell, *Imitations* [New York, Farrar, 1961], p. xi; Dryden, "Preface to Ovid's Epistles," *Poetical Works*, 2nd ed., ed. George R. Noyes [Boston, Houghton, 1950], p. 91.) Bloom has on occasion compared influence to translation or mistranslation, but without developing the notion fully (*The Anxiety of Influence*, p. 71; *Poetry and Repression*, p. 14).

¹⁴ Bloom, Poetry and Repression, p. 13; Leslie Fiedler, "The Dream of the New," American Dreams, American Nightmare, ed. David Madden (Carbondale:

Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970), p. 26.

15 Bloom, A Map of Misreading, p. 36.

¹⁶ Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence, p. 12; Oxford Anthology of English Literature, II (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 1465-67.

¹⁷ Seidel, "Robert Lowell," p. 23.

¹⁸ Lowell Manuscripts Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁹ The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, 4th ed., ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 100.

²⁰ Robert Lowell, Lord Weary's Castle (New York: Harcourt, 1946), p. 29.

²¹ The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, p. 67; Lowell, Lord Weary's Castle, p. 69.

²² Lowell, Lord Weary's Castle, p. 5; The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, p.

69.

²³ Lowell, "Hopkins and Baudelaire," Sewanee Review, 53 (1945), 136–40. For an account of Baudelaire's influence on Lowell, considered in isolation from Hopkins, see S. G. Axelrod, 'Baudelaire and the Poetry of Robert Lowell," Twentieth Century Literature, 17 (1971), 257–74.

²⁴ Lowell, "A Note," Kenyon Review, 6 (Fall 1944), 583-86; rpt. as "Hopkins' Sanctity," Gerard Manley Hopkins by the Kenyon Critics (Norfolk, Conn.: New

Directions, 1945), pp. 89-93.

25 Bloom, A Map of Misreading, pp. 13-37.

²⁶ An Eliot-influenced comparison of "The Quaker Graveyard" to "The Wreck of the Deutschland" appears in Paul J. Dolan, "Lowell's Quaker Graveyard: Poem and Tradition," Renascence, 21 (Summer 1969), 171–80, 194. Although he does not mention Hopkins, Hugh Staples identifies many of the poem's other allusions in Robert Lowell: The First Twenty Years (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), pp. 45–52, 101–04. Paul Fussell discusses the "American seashore ode" in "Whitman's Curious Warble" (The Presence of Walt Whitman, ed. R. W. B. Lewis [New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1962], pp. 28–51), without specifically including Lowell's poem in the genre. Lowell's title seems to allude ironically to two elegies: Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" and Longfellow's "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport."

²⁷ Lowell, Lord Weary's Castle, pp. 8-15; Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, pp.

51-63.

²⁸ John Pick, Gerard Manley Hopkins: Priest and Poet (1942; rpt. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 40.

²⁹ Brooks, Modern Poetry and the Tradition, p. 241.

³⁰ This aspect of Hopkins' poem has been well noted by J. Hillis Miller in "The Linguistic Moment in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland,' " (*The New Critcism and After*, ed. Thomas D. Young [Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976], pp. 47–60) and Michael Sprinker in A Counterpoint of Dissonance: The Aesthetics and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 96–119.

31 To these passages we might add a third, from another Hopkins poem

about a shipwreck, "The Loss of the Eurydice" (Poems, pp. 72-76):

They say who saw one sea-corpse cold He was all of lovely manly mould, Every inch a tar, Of the best we boast our sailors are.

Look, foot to forelock, how all things suit! he Is strung by duty, is strained to beauty,
And brown-as-dawning-skinned
With brine and shine and whirling wind.

O his nimble finger, his gnarled grip! Leagues, leagues of seamanship Slumber in these forsaken Bones, this sinew, and will not waken.

Lowell singled out this embarrasingly weak counterpart to "The Wreck of the Deutschland" for blame in his "Note" on Hopkins, and "The Quaker Graveyard" parallels it antithetically.

³² "That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire," *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, pp. 105–06. Hopkins' second "is" has frequently been printed in capitals, like

Lowell's.

33 Sprinker, A Counterpoint of Dissonance, pp. 99-100.

³⁴ Neither Lowell nor his critics has connected this change of voice to his relations with Hopkins. For Lowell's comments, see Seidel, "Robert Lowell," pp. 18–21, and "On Skunk Hour," *The Contemporary Poet as Artist and Critic*, ed.

Anthony Ostroff (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), pp. 107–10. For critical appraisals, see Charles Altieri, "Poetry in a Prose World: Robert Lowell's *Life Studies,*" *Modern Poetry Studies*, 2 (1970), 182–98; Axelrod, *Robert Lowell: Life and Art*, pp. 74–133; George McFadden, "'Life Studies'—Robert Lowell's Comic Breakthrough," *PMLA*, 90 (Jan. 1975), 96–106; Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 80–130; and E. Wyatt Prunty, "The Dislocated Self: Robert Lowell's 'The Mills of the Kavanaughs,' "Diss. Louisiana State University 1979, 251 pp.

35 Lowell, Life Studies (New York: Farrar, 1959), pp. 89-90.

36 Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence, p. 14.

³⁷ See R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 1–10 and passim; Joseph Riddel, "Decentering the Image: the 'Project' of 'American' Poetics?," *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josué Harari (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 322–58; and Harold Bloom, *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism* (New York; Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 32–34, 171–78.

38 Lowell, Notebook 1967-68 (New York: Farrar, 1969), p. 151.

- ³⁵ Lowell, *Notebook* (New York: Farrar, 1970), p. 255. In a subsequent version of the poem, Hopkins remains out: *History* (New York: Farrar, 1973), p. 203.
 - 40 Lowell, For the Union Dead (New York: Farrar, 1964), pp. 68-69.

⁴¹ Winters, Collected Poems, rev. ed. (Chicago: Swallow, 1960), p. 62. ⁴² The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, p. 101.

⁴³ William Butler Yeats, *Collected Poems*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 232–37; Theodore Roethke, *Collected Poems* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 239.

44 Edward Said, Beginnings: Intention and Method (New York: Basic Books,

1975), pp. 263–66.

45 The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, pp. 69-70.

46 Ibid., p. 69.

⁴⁷ Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence, p. 95.

Postmodern Language and the Perpetuation of Desire

MARILYN L. BROWNSTEIN

Neither culture nor its destruction is erotic; it is the seam between them, the fault, the flaw which becomes so.

Roland Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text

An interdiction by eros, a blocking of the line of fire between culture and its destruction, an erotic intradiction, is a strikingly postmodern project. In The Pleasure of the Text Roland Barthes conceives of such interventions as affect of "the texts of bliss." And there is an undisputable and Nietzschean chic to the ahistorical range of possibility: Sollers, de Sade, Flaubert, Balzac, Zola (to name a few of Barthes' elect, practitioners of this art). It is my contention, however, that among twentieth-century texts there is, besides a random list of texts of intermittent bliss, a group distinctively postmodern in their deployment of interstitial bliss as organizing principle, as recapitulation of the essential nature and condition of life itself. Here the most lifelike of models is made from a language least like life's own. For these texts, out of the dynamic and the discrete elements of bliss (desire), a particular intersection of metapsychology, metaphysics, and neurobiology provides a syntax and grammar of postmodernism. The last work of James Joyce and that of his notable contemporary, Virginia Woolf, offer rich studies of both the superficial strangeness and diversity and the identical underpinnings which characterize the postmodern, the flickering of eros between culture and its destruction. Here what Woolf called "thoughts without words," a protracted and infantile bliss as palliative to the persistent dream of lost unity, suggests the elaboration

of desire which is both matter and manner of the awakening and the dream.

Psychoanalytically, desire is ontological, although this first principle of consciousness already represents a break in psychoanalytic theory; it is a rift, however, not unlike Barthes' seam in that it serves to keep two elements autonomous but joined. The first, the form of desire which is most familiar, the cultural form, is the orthodox Freudian version, best represented in the work of Jacques Lacan. Lacan posits the origins of consciousness at around eighteen months, the period of genital territorialization with its demanding choices, and the initiation of speech, what Lacan calls departure from the "real" and entry into the "symbolic" order. Here for "symbolic" we may substitute "cultural" order. This phase accounts not only for genderization but also for differences in the development of men and women and specifically in their varying relationship to language. Men, Lacan suggests, in opting for similarity, identify with the aggressor, an only slightly less threatening choice than continuing the bond with the maternal body. The triangulation of desire is thus the evasion of the "real," the "mortgage" (death pledge) of the penis to the phallic or symbolic order. Women, it would seem, at this stage, are less vulnerable. Their entry into the symbolic order, Lacan tells us, is still characterized by a tolerance for the "real." Later in this essay the neurophysiological evidence will clarify the significance of this; for now let me suggest that it is this dynamic of desire which provides ground for revolution, the postmodern rebellion which privileges the "real" in language as opposed to the "tyranny of the signifier," the domination of linear, hierarchical, "symbolic" forms.

The model for desire whose traces in language represent the "real," the potential for the destruction of culture, is initially the work of Melanie Klein and her gifted pupil and colleague, D. W. Winnicott. For Object Relations analysts consciousness of desire, that is, consciousness itself, commences at three to five months with an earlier version of separation from the maternal body, the recognition of the body's boundaries (individuation), triggered by the first acknowledged absence of the source of immediate gratification. Here desire inaugurates containment of the oceanic self, a precipitate of the memory of primal loss, a model for survival based on first principles. This first turn of memory is absolutely practical—a striving for at-onement in spite of loss and concomitant fluctuations of remembering and forgetting, a temporizing of loss until more creative solutions are available. Memory here is sensational, repeating the conditions of a bodily ego at an earlier

time. Preverbal desire then is all feeling and image, a storage of sensation as a series of objects. The text which is the mimesis of this condition may be said to operate out of a postverbal mnemonic, one which attempts to place the signified(s) of experience, rather than the signifiers, on the surface. In these (postmodern) texts dual forms of desire (two-body, preverbal and three-body, triangulated) blaze in the interstices as the simultaneously attractive and repulsive energies of thoughts-without-words-cast-into-language exist on their own terms (organizations anterior to grammar, destructive to culture) and with respect to language (the prevailing cultural forms) out of which they are necessarily cast.

Along with the metapsychological model goes the reassurance of a neurophysiological account. Current brain theory based primarily on split-brain research and studies in visual perception3 indicate that the opposing views of desire are not at all incompatible. A theory of bimodal consciousness, which in just this last decade has replaced theories of specialized or localized brain function, encourages scientists to speak convincingly of brain and mind together (with the caveat, of course, that the two are not-yet-one and the same, but the correlates are becoming increasingly interesting). Current research contends that mental unity depends upon interhemispheric communication, the key to which is the myelination, the activation, of the neuron-rich covering of the brain's two hemispheres. The slow and incremental development of the corpus callosum, the covering of the deep cerebral commissure, and at an asymmetrical rate in men and women, points to support for both views of desire as not merely compatible but compulsory. Preverbal behavior, for example, corresponds precisely to what is known to be possible in the mute or unlanguaged right brain, and languaged behavior to the capacities of the left brain. Moreover, mental unity, mature function, and balanced speech are derived from the functions of a united brain, a development incomplete until adolescence—and measurably later in men than in women.

Finally, then, any theory of consciousness which implies a theory of language must attend to dual-track forms. What psychoanalytic criticism has supplied to date is readings which principally take in all aspects of the languaged left hemisphere. These theories cover triangulated desire on the narrative level, stretched to the social and political realms by, for example, structuralist theory (Levi Strauss), myth criticism (René Girard), Freudian revisions of history (Herbert Marcuse, Norman O. Brown), and close analyses of language based on the dream tropes of condensation and displacement and the principal psychic

defenses of Oedipal (what I prefer to call three-body) development, the systems of substitution and analogy which find expression in language in the tropes of metaphor and metonymy and their variants.

In the twentieth century the developments in language that we call high modernism represent this languaged aspect of consciousness stretched to its farthest aesthetic extension. Here foregrounded systems of language exploit the history and consciousness of a literate race. The achievement of high modernism is, in fact, the management of purely signifying forms (if I may be allowed this distinction in spite of a fashionable world that insists that all of language consists of purely signifying forms). Here I refer to all linguistic levels from grammar and syntax to the architectonically ordered schemes of high modernism based on the classical art of rhetoric, the ancient art of memory⁴ and the name/place formula which has ordered Western literature since antiquity.

In Joyce's Ulysses, for example, the name/place formula functions much in the manner that one does in Homer where, book by book, no action may occur until location is named and actors placed in their appropriate environments. In the modernist version the life of the city is idiosyncratically alphabetized, and the order of the ancient world, under the auspices of coincidence, made modern. In the "Hades" episode, for instance, in the naming of the route of Dignam's funeral procession and the naming of the past, present, and future stops of a turf-boat Bloom watches from the funeral carriage, the alphabetization begins. The initial list is not conclusive: Athlone, Leixlip, (Milly in) Mullingar, (Molly as) Moyvalley-but as in all memory schemes, we must look back in order to move on. In the "Aeolus" episode the list begins again, this time as tramstops "bawled out" by a timekeeper: Blackrock, Kingstown, Dalkey, Clonsea. Then, as if the center of the alphabet were already accountd for, or perhaps as the acknowledgment of the temporal rearrangements of the "Hades" and "Aeolus" episodes in Joyce's version as opposed to the order in Homer, we jump: Rathgar, Terenure, Palmerston Park, upper Rathmines, Sandymount Green, Rathmines, Ringsend, Sandymount Tower. Thus the journey begun in Bloom's head in "Hades," the place to which one must always go in order to progress (at least according to the Elpenor motif of the Odyssey), becomes the timekeeper's vocalization, a continuation of the boatman's journey, a stream of sound made up roughly of the order of the alphabets of the Western world. What is more, Bloom's remembering in "Hades" makes his future, which is also the timekeeper's route through the city, possible. Parts of the alphabet and parts of the world

join in place and letter names which both enable and are Bloom's

journey.

Here is both location and locution of modernist desire, a longing for the past, transformed in the modern novel by the abandonment of traditional narrative technique and its replacement with self-consciously generated structures, innovative perhaps to the (short) history of this literary form, although hardly new to a history of mind. For the modernist writer the scale is grand, as is the ambition: the creation of a space which is all time, or any time as all time in the mind, the expansive depths of historical memory in consciousness. In Joyce's lexicon this is a demonstration of the power of language, "metempsychosis" is his word, the transformation of the nightmare of

history into a living (and lively) body of literature.

Crucial to this discussion, then, is the remarkable coincidence in which Joyce and Woolf, at the same points in their careers, turned from the modernist achievements of Ulysses and To the Lighthouse to the postmodern mysteries of Finnegans Wake and Between the Acts. Simultaneously and separately, each turned from a mind which is all language to one which is all feeling. The consolation of the postmodern, in each case, seemed not to be found in the equilibrium of language and world, human and personal history, matter and mind. Instead what is celebrated in Finnegans Wake (despite the terrible trouble of Joyce's last years), and invoked on each page, in each sentence (rising from the page, raising its fist) of Between the Acts, is the recall of the body in a more simple time, the memory of a body at rest with its own desire or wrestling with its own desire, a body occurring, as all of Joyce's characters do in Finnegans Wake, and Woolf's in Between the Acts, as physical extensions of their own desire, operating in subliminal moments, to take another phrase from another great postmodern writer, when "all things are palpable, none are known."5 Order in any (postmodern) case is not discernible in the symmetry of alphabetized grids nor is it obvious in neat historical schemes and cycles,6 but it is discoverable as a series of distinctive linguistic events signaling the original intersection of loss and desire. In these texts an opaque array of right-brain elements is superimposed on more familiar and ordinarily dominant left-brain elements in a fancy archaeology of preverbal nostalgia (desire) and (ab)original creativity. This development, I would argue, is not part of a regression in the history of literary language, but instead a series of paradigmatic accounts of dual-track language and bimodal consciousness at a point in development before these forms operate synchronically, a gesture of a postverbal mnemonic in revolt from the exclusively

languaged (overdetermined) forms of high modernism. And in the fascinating manner that the literary imagination sometimes anticipates scientific achievement, both Joyce and Woolf, nearly six decades before the neurophysiological fact, nearly exactly reproduced the dual-track and unsynchronized forms which scientists tell us are part of infantile experience.

A more detailed consideration of preverbal experience (psychoanalytic and neurophysiological) provides keys to the shape of the postmodern memory field and the objects which constitute it. According to Object Relations Theory the recognition of maternal absence—the origin of consciousness—is an occasion of epic sadness (doubled, coinciding as it does, with the bodily ego's re-membering of primal loss) but also one filled with the elations of a world gained (birth memory, individuation) and of an arcane gainsaying (what Winnicott calls "the first imaginative elaborations of need," the creation of transitional phenomenon as a means of coping with desire and the passage of time until the nurturing body returns). The first moment of consciousness, then, is a moment of desire fused to a peculiar amalgam of loss and concomitant but unmollifying gain, a model repeated throughout the grand march of life's essential occasions.

Perhaps most significant to first desire and the reconstitution of the postmodern field is the location of the originary split in being. It is almost as if, in the recovery of primal loss, the infantile system, that perfect mimic, begins a doubling as recovery of intrauterine existence. In the beginning, of course, in the first few months of life, being is at one with the world. With the necessary trauma of first desire, however, comes a defensive split which remembers original dismembering; that is, birth is its model. Here the unitary self splits to leave part of being undisturbed and part free to strive for equilibrium under stress. Defensive splitting then as it recapitulates birth recounts the dream of lost unity in which boundaries are finally discovered between the originating body and its other, the rudimentary self. Here first memory is already a repetition of the body's past which provides for a future in a newly created form, and, most significant, a self-created formdoubled-id and ego or subject I and object I. Memory here encompasses all possibility.

Furthermore, and only clear retrospectively, it would seem that the first mental act is not remembering but the forgetting of the trauma of birth until the bodily ego (the ego sufficiently developed by good maternal attention) in need of defense for a second loss of the mother,

remembers and repeats the experience, the second time at its own volition and with the aid of phenomenal memory. This constructive fluctuation of forgetting and remembering under the auspices of desire is reflected in the wisdom of an ancient memory trace, for it is the philosopher lover of the Phaedrus (a precursor perhaps of the twentieth-century analyst in his offer of love and knowledge, discourse or intercourse, and sexual excitement uncontaminated by sexual consummation) who recalls sensational memory. In Socrates' second speech in the *Phaedrus* it is the reincarnated soul which "through the darkling organs of sense"8 recalls Realities beyond heaven's dome, beyond a magical border. Here the dream of lost unity may be reconstituted only by a privileged few; for most, the memory has the evaporation rate of all dreams. Platonic memory in its sensational aspect reflects the infantile ego. In its flickering retrospection Platonic memory is a model for the metaphysical questioning of being; the forgetting prior to the initiation of consciousness is the paradigm for the retrospective trace producing [sic] in Heidegger, desire sous rature in Derrida. In psychoanalytic terms, the flickering trace marks the originary division of id as unconscious energy or momentum, desire itself, and the ego, that part of consciousness which traffics with a freshly recognized world (re-cognized under the auspices of phenomenal memory).

Neurobiologically, there are correlates which figure both in their structure and function, as well as developmentally. Current split-brain research indicates that the key to consciousness is not, as was previously believed, the takeover of experience by the languaged left hemisphere from the mute right brain. Instead it is the incremental myelination of the corpus callosum which initiates communication between the hemispheres at around three months. Preverbal function, for the most part, is likely two-brain but separate. Although the anterior stem may permit limited interhemispheric communication, the brain's symmetry and engram buildup indicate that at the first stirring of consciousness, communication is limited and perception very likely dual track. The fullest picture we now have of mature functioning provides the best grounds for speculation about infantile consciousness. With the complete maturity of the corpus callosum, impulses from the right side, for example, are registered on the left hemisphere and then relayed via the corpus callosum to the right brain before a response may occur (and vice versa, of course, for impulses on the body's left side). Recent advances in brain study provide keys to this synchronic arrangement particularly

apparent in the development and use of language. The nearly perfect symmetry of the brain's two halves is interrupted only by the seat of manipulospatial control in the right brain and the corresponding temporal-parietal-occipital area in the left brain, which is where language ultimately develops. Two things are important here and crucial to a theory of postmodern language systems. First, it is not entirely true that the right brain is unlanguaged. It is found, in some cases, to possess minimal function—most interestingly, nouns but no verbs, negatives but no plurals. These capabilities figure importantly in the systems I am about to describe. These capabilities reproduce precisely what Object Relations Theory posits as the capabilities of consciousness during the first months of life.

The second point about language function is equally interesting. Lateralized experiments show that although the left brain controls not only all of actual language itself but also capabilities for speech, mouth position, tongue movements, and so on, research with stroke and splitbrain patients indicates that there must be communication between right and left brain for normal activity. The role of the mute brain seems to be one of emotional storage, memory stored as images, nominalized presences, which are presented to the languaged brain sometimes by invitation and other times by surprise. Some of the most enterprising research shows that the languaged brain when observing a response that it recognizes, such as laughter or tears, but does not comprehend, makes up what it does not know. That is, in experiments where a message is lateralized, sent exclusively to the mute brain, and a response generated, the split-brain subject will inevitably attempt an explanation based on what she observes herself doing. Late in development then, the mute brain seems to be the seat of what psychoanalysis calls the unconscious mind. It is, of course, also the source of dream images. To move these observations into a linguistic context is to suggest then that the right brain holds the signifieds and the left produces the signifiers of consciousness.

These signifieds, what we might call memory or aboriginal thought, are stored as a cache of synaesthetic objects. Here, in the case of preverbal desire, the phantoms of emptiness and pain, loss and desire are balanced by the stored and restoring objects of good maternal attention. These objects are layered, split, and stored as curiously imaginative amalgams which are discernible in the idiosyncratic tropes of the texts I am going to study. And it is this particular doubling which reflects both the doubling activity of the brain's two hemispheres and

the doubling of the painful memory of primal loss with yet another, more current memory. This more current memory from which the storage of good objects originates is Winnicott's version of the theory of desire.¹⁰

Primary Maternal Preoccupation, Winnicott tells us, is the temporary neurosis of a healthy mother, who, near term in her pregnancy, experiences a dissolution of ego boundaries which enables her to anticipate the infant's needs as if they were her own. What every healthy infant then experiences, along with separation fears, is the good sense that somewhere out there is a not/me, a breast, who desires me precisely as I desire her. Nature's lovely symmetry, as well as human nature's, is reflected in the evidence that (a.) the mother recovers from this ego (con)-fusion just about three months after giving birth, that is, just as the infant's corpus callosum begins to myelinate, and (b.) this neurosis is observable in parents of either sex and even in adopting ones, indicating that Primary Maternal Preoccupation is a psychological rather than a biological phenomenon. This model for desire further accounts for the originary split in being, for at the moment of her desire the infant is neither more nor less than what she needs and what the other needs of her. For those of us who won't grow up, there is always a desire waiting out there, corresponding in pitch and intensity to our own.

What is crucial then is that at the origins of consciousness there occur not only a split in being (useful in literary discussions in locating the source and ground of the narrative voice) but a system of linked and coinciding pairs which are the first principles and discrete elements of postmodern writing. First pairs in preverbal systems, recovered in literature in a postverbal mnemonic, include me/not me, inner/outer, desire/with its amalgam of loss and gain, background/foreground, image/significance, and the equation of primary loss with its secondary manifestation, the first recognition of the body's boundaries, this latter set dramatically important as the model for future moments of desire and as paradigm for a system of unitary oppositions, each member of a set knowable only in terms of and in the presence of its other. Here the bimodal consciousness entertains not systems of binary oppositions (which would be systems functioning in terms of some distinct lexicon and categories) but retrospections at the core of experience which occur in sets of two. These sets, in fact, are central to the bimodal consciousness. Here "me" and "not me" or background and foreground are linked, simultaneously balanced, and available to consciousness. Here we know things only in their presence and their otherness, and thought consists of autonomous yet interdependent planes of experience.

At this stage, since mind is all and only spatial, and since experience is recorded as sets of linked pairs, the notion of category is irrelevant. It would seem, in fact, that thought closely follows the possibilities for minimal language of the mute brain. Here experience is nominalized and not plural; neither are there tense markers nor agents of time. Here opposing and complementary pairs join object, emotion, action, sensation—all stored as things: nominalized presences stacked in memory's great warehouse.

And just as the generalizing habit which creates category is impossible at this moment of being, so are the feats of substitution and analogy, the roots of metaphor and metonymy, the latter two only feasible in the logic of three-body desire where replacement of the unavailable object of desire becomes the viable response. Preverbally, however, we only count to two, and with rare exception we continue to do so during life's recapitulations of the dynamics of desire/loss/gain—the often painful and exhilarating periods of growth and change.

This persistent doubling of desire must be considered in its dynamic as well as in the linkage of discrete pairs in order to remember the memory field. At the moment of loss, primitive objects of mind are projected in a replication of maternal nurturing. Winnicott describes this first transaction beyond the body as the creation of a "band of illusion," a magical space beginning at the boundaries of the infantile body and extending toward the dream of recovery, the imagined boundaries of the body to which we all yearn to return. ¹¹ Into this not unbounded but indeterminately shaped space the infant casts good objects of mind in an obedient and faithful mirroring of the nurturing body's behavior (desire). These good objects are cathected in service to the infantile ego and may be decathected when their use is outmoded.

This behavior of transitional objects may be equated with the semantic habits of individual words or even phonemes in the post-modern text where individual words may mean one thing each time they appear and another different thing in subsequent appearances. This slippage in signification is in clear contrast to the habits of words in modernist texts whose associative energies and idiosyncratic references create the seamless systems, the memory temples which rise in grandeur for the duration of the text. A quick example would be the modernist achievement of the associative network of *Ulysses* where, by

virtue of simple contiguity and repetition, what Bloom calls "the longest way round" becomes "the shortest way home." Throughout the novel, but definitively clustered in the "Aeolus" episode, a system of meaning is created as several versions of "will" in several languages and a myriad of contexts meet "par," journalese for paragraph, and "parr," a young salmon, and "pear," Molly from the rear, and "pear-shaped tones," Molly from the front, and the seductive fruit (the pear tree in Gibraltar and Boylan's gift), and pairs such as Shakespeare and Anne (who with her Will, another linguistic pair, a pun) Hath-a-way, and illicit pairs such as Lord Nelson and Emma Hamilton and Don Giovanni and Zerlina (who in paired wrong versions of "Laci darem . . ."-sung by Bloom—confuse the question of sexual willing) while pairs like "kells" and "kelt" (the Irish past and salmon after spawning) raise emptiness as a political issue, and a variant, "calle," the birth membrane and fabric for black coats brings life to death and death to life in the apparition of MacIntosh who exists initially only as his coat. Here matters of life and death, loyalty and progeny, the making of metaphor and art, Bloom's will and Molly's way—all of the book's major concerns are revealed in a list become system at the core of the novel.

By contrast, and as a result of particular linguistic contexts hostile to grammar and syntax, even the definite article in a poem by William Carlos Williams means something different each time it appears. Williams' tmetic (sic) habit, the peculiarities of syllable breaks abetted by unusual lineation, serves an instability of reference, most often in Williams an instability in parts of speech. Joyce accomplished the same (differently) in *Finnegans Wake* with a steady deployment of intralinguistic puns which form strings of nominalized presences on one level of the text while simultaneously they function syntactically in combination with the narrative line. In this manner even the (rare) reappearance of a made-up word in *Finnegans Wake* as it appears in a new context means a new thing. It is result then, end not means, effect not method, which defines postmodern linguistic contexts. The very nature of the postverbal mnemonic accounts for wildest superficial diversity as well as the transitional nature of reference.

This last example, the behavior of the pun in *Finnegans Wake*, has further implications for the makeup of the postmodern memory field. The dual track of the postverbal mnemonic as it develops in the most radical language of the twentieth century may be traced to the slow myelination of the *corpus callosum*. The preverbal infant is "of two minds, one which is sensory, objective, abstract, and the other which is spatial, subjective, and phantasy oriented." This double vision ac-

counts for the nominalized field in Finnegans Wake operating along with no-matter-what-else, and similarly, for example, the opening of Woolf's Between the Acts where disrupted pronoun reference (six occurrences of "they" in a page and one-half, five without antecedents) vies with the oddities of cows "coughing" and eyes "gobbling" until a lurid world of caricature emerges in which human reference grows dim and animal states proliferate. Also, on these first pages, a series of bird references commands our attention: faded peacocks, a pop-eyed goose, swans bound in duckweed, a nightingale, some daylights birds, until the passage ends with a bird's-eye view from an airplane determining the point of view as human after all. There is no building of metaphor in this passage; these birds do not join to constellate a single meaning. Instead they collect in a band of illusion. Avian shapes here are interesting, some bound to emotion like the jealousy of the vicious thrush, others to the swan's melancholy. These birds, however, do not mean; they simply congregate, and the field of the novel is an oscillating background/ foreground. Birds stalk the big room along with conversations of cesspools and Roman roads. Vision is not binocular. Action, image, sound, speech, emotion, object occupy doubled yet linked planes of experience.

As categories are destroyed (semantic categories and parts of speech) and double vision creates a doubling of the narrative, time is also destroyed. This is another characteristic of postmodern texts where planes of experience are not conditioned by the passage of time (psychoanalytically time is an inconvenience to be reckoned with in the creation of transitional phenomena). Doubled experience is the expression of longing fused to waiting. And without the ordering agency of time (neurophysiologically, the agency of the linear, languaged, left hemisphere of the brain) the band of illusion is managed by various postmodern writers, variously. The shape of the memory field is a consequence of the objects chosen to fill the field. What is clear is that the field of memory is shallow in its third dimension. (Here historical systems are not sacked as they are in modernist works; here the depths of the field are the depths of memory in individual consciousness.) John Ashbery's "etched impression of mutability"13 comes to mind, an expanse of world viewed through glass clouded by the poet's breath, and this frosted window briefly inscribed so that the seesaw of vision is not time present and past but Barthes' "plagiarizing edge," the recovery of desire, time spatialized as the coincidence of emotion and a framed patch of the world out there, a vision filtered by the poet's breath on

window glass, visible in speech already fading on the glass but nonetheless organizing what can be seen.

An overview of Ashbery's poetry reveals works made of prepositions, a proliferation of this simple part of speech accompanied by texture words (lattice, trellis, braid, plaid) which organize interdependent planes of experience on which the "main memory" is recovered. These interdependent planes in the "convex mirror" volume are interesting in that their arrangement perfectly echoes the model in Winnicott's paper on transitional phenomenon. There, Winnicott draws something like this.¹⁴

Ashbery's schema in the aforementioned volume is one of convex and concave surfaces, and in the former case, the spaces behind serve as well. (In the title poem the inner spaces are the locations of imagination and memory.) What is more, in the volume following *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, *Houseboat Days*, Ashbery creates a comic version where the mirror is a common street fixture, a hubcap, and the work of art, a cartoon character's jaundiced reflection.¹⁵

In (postmodern) Woolf similar effect is achieved by peculiarly wrenched subordination. For example, there is a passage in *Between the Acts* framed by mirror-image sentences which are modified by framing participial phrases. The proper subject of the first sentence, however, is properly modified by the participial phrases of the second. And vice versa. The subject of the first is Lucy Swithin, the aging aunt of Giles and Isa Oliver. It is her guest, the homosexual artist, William Dodge, who is subject of the other. The occasion of double vision is a visit to Lucy's childhood bedchamber, where she perches on the bed (dangling her feet) and where the dangling participles deposit Dodge in her lap. Actually he is seated so that their "disembodied" eyes meet in a mirror

opposite the bed. Later we discover the incestuous relationship of Lucy and her brother Bart, very likely conducted when Bart was about the age that Dodge is at this telling instant. Still later Lucy celebrates the "stirring of her unacted parts." This is the seesaw of postmodern vision along with the cancellation of linear temporality, a layering of the mind's objects and the narrative's objects in a band of illusion until all the story is told, even the "unacted" parts. Here fantasy and reality do not compete but coexist.

"So why, pray tell, sign anything as long as every word, letter, penstroke, paperspace is a perfect signature of its own?" we are asked on page 115 of *Finnegans Wake*. Why indeed? One side of the story told above is about the unique nature of each penstroke each time it appears, and the other, a question of the subject. In postmodern writing the subject is subverted at every stroke. The author of desire in each penstroke subverts herself by speaking/writing her desire. The author is inconsequential as her desire becomes her: desire perpetuated along with its rewards, its creative elaborations.

For Jacques Lacan the subject of desire is an unattainable (or nearly so) ideal. As a noun "I" is unreliable since I am always nothing more or less than subject and object of desire. I am, in my need, the desire to know what the other wants of me. Here the originator of Lacanian desire is (a subverted other—barely acknowledged by Lacan) Winnicott, whose theory of Primary Maternal Preoccupation is at the heart of the Lacanian notion of the subversion of the subject. Winnicott's emphasis, however, is cheerier as it offers relief from ego fusion in the mother's recovery just as the child's lifework which is separation begins. Lacan, on the other hand, sees the early model as the nearly stable model for desire. In the last work of Virginia Woolf, a work which favors the Lacanian version, desire is sounded in the lowing of a cow who has lost her calf, a "dumb yearning" which eclipses human activity. The perpetuation of desire in this, perhaps the saddest book I have ever read, is accomplished in this key image at the center of the book which reverberates in the potentially tragic dependency of the incestuous siblings, in the violent marriage of Giles and Isa, and in the solitary and unassuaged hungers of the lesbian artist, Miss Latrobealthough artistic yearning here is clearly the note of hope. Mrs. Manresa's artistry in creating desire is a parody of the Romantic solution in that she is the object of all desiring on a summer's day. For Woolf the failure of language in this miracle of compression is the perpetuation of "dumb yearning," "the primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present" as, perhaps, all there is to know.16

Another version of the joining of Logos with the signification of desire is Samuel Beckett's Not I, a monologue staged merely for mouth announcing the absence of life's key objects—"called . . . no matter . . . parents unknown . . . unheard of . . . he having vanished . . . thin air" "she similarly . . ." "so no love . . . spared that . . . no love such as normally vented on . . . speechless infant . . . in the home . . . no . . ."¹⁷—language attempting to make present and pressing what is oppressively and presently absent. This is the model for the post-modern moment by our greatest living postmodern writer. Absence in this case reflects a Lacanian subversion of the subject, the subject pronoun in the object position and following its own negation. Thus this title marks the still point of the special nature of postmodern irony. Here is an I that cannot stop talking coextensive with the self it simultaneously is and is not. That is, in order for negation to occur, I must exist. Here "I" exists as its own extension in language; here "I" is, by prior definition, a transitional object.

And finally, desire in Joyce's last work takes an unwieldier multiform. Finnegans Wake is an outrageously distended body with many protruding limbs, comical distortions of an extended family whose slumbrous father, accused of all sorts of familiar crimes committed mostly when he is allegedly asleep and whose blathering mother, equally diffident in all her aspects (although at least we are certain she's alive), present themselves and family baggage bulging with need, rivalry, suspicion, complaint-all known hungers for the other-and joyous, unquenchable, Irish thirst (the rich, dark underside of perpetual desire). The answer here is to live in the mind as if it were the body where "a leak in the thatch" or "a hole in the hat" admits seepage of parts of the world (directly to the head). Briefly, all is foreground and the subject is not lost but reunited with desire. Joyce's solution seems to signal the end to the interminable analysis, the brief moment in which word is returned to a system of reference before the horny specter of a linguistic last judgment offers laughter, then silence, in which we must prepare to begin again.

¹ Virginia Woolf, Between the Acts (London: Hogarth Press, 1969).

² Jacques Lacan, Le Seminaire livre XX: Encore, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller

(Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975).

⁴ Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), Chapter I, "The Three Latin Sources for the Classical Art of Memory."

³ Michael S. Gazzaniga and Joseph E. LeDoux, *The Integrated Mind* (New York: Plenum Press, 1978); David Marr, *Vision* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1982). These two books together offer the fullest and most recent account of brain-function studies.

⁵ John Ashbery, Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 22.

⁶ Richard Ellman, ed., Selected Letters of James Joyce (New York: Viking, 1975), p. 321. In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, Joyce acknowledges that his use of Vico is a matter of device rather than philosophical conviction.

⁷ D. W. Winnicott, Collected Papers: Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis (London: Tavistock, 1958), "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenome-

non."

⁸ Plato, Phaedrus, trans. H. H. Fowler (Loeb editions), 249 E-250 D.

⁹ James S. Grotstein, M.D., *Splitting and Projective Identification* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1981). All of the constructs dealing with splitting in this paper are the result of my syntheses of Grotstein's work (most completely represented in this volume). This is the best account of contemporary Object Relations Theory that I have encountered.

10 Winnicott, Collected Papers: Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis, "Pri-

mary Maternal Preoccupation."

11 Ibid., p. 240.

12 Grotstein, Splitting and Projective Identification, p. 7.

¹³ John Ashbery, Houseboat Days (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 74.

¹⁴ Winnicott, Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis, p. 240.

¹⁵ Ashbery, *Houseboat Days*, p. 31. ¹⁶ Woolf, *Between the Acts*, p. 140.

¹⁷ Samuel Beckett, Odds and Ends (New York: Grove Press, 1974), p. 15.

Barbara Pym Herself and Jane Austen

FREDERICK M. KEENER

Under "Austen," that is where reviewers repeatedly filed the ten novels of Barbara Pym published between 1950 and 1982. The connection was apt because Barbara Pym recurrently, explicitly, and tacitly invited it, far more than, say, Jane Austen invited comparison with any particular predecessor. Pym's novels are decidedly literary. The narrators are readers; so, more than in most novelists, are a good many of the characters. And what Pym's narrators and characters have read is, regularly, Austen, among other authors mentioned time and again.

The last novel Pym wrote, A Few Green Leaves, has, for example, a heroine with the same name as the heroine of Austen's Emma. The naming of the later Emma, moreover, is stipulated as no coincidence, for her mother, "who was a tutor in English Literature at a women's college, specialising in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel," had named her "perhaps with the hope that some of the qualities possessed by the heroine of the novel might be perpetuated" (p. 8).

In this essay I shall, within limits, test the usefulness of comparing the two novelists, but shall write about Pym's novels somewhat discursively, for two reasons. As successful with the public as the novels have become, there are still many interested readers who do not know all of them well. And the question of debts to Austen should be kept in perspective; the debts are not by any means the whole story.

Barbara Pym's personal story has begun to be public in some detail, thanks to the appearance in 1984 of an autobiographical compilation drawn from her diaries, notebooks, and letters, A Very Private Eye.² The book reveals some of what she thought and felt about those salient events of her life that her readers had heard of before: education at Oxford; service in the Navy; editorial work at the International

And whereas Austen's Emma is, famously, "handsome, clever, and rich," her Miss Bates, though popular, is "neither young, handsome, rich, nor married." By contrast with her, Emma and some of the other Austen heroines approach being demigoddesses: fallible yet superb, effervescent. Miss Bates bubbles only gently.

... She had no intellectual superiority to make atonement to herself, or frighten those who might hate her, into outward respect. She had never boasted either beauty or cleverness. . . . And yet she was a happy woman, and a woman whom no one named without good-will. It was her own universal good-will and contented temper which worked such wonders. She loved every body, was interested in every body's happiness, quick-sighted to every body's merits; thought herself a most fortunate creature, and surrounded with blessings in such an excellent mother and so many good neighbours and friends. . . . She was a great talker upon little matters, which exactly suited Mr. Woodhouse. . . . 4

Miss Bates, in short, is the closest thing in Austen to an Excellent Woman, as Barbara Pym would develop that type. *Excellent Women* is the title of her second published novel, and the sort of woman the phrase denotes is almost ubiquitous across the canon.

The phrase sounds like a quotation; if it is, as title it would resemble the titles of some other Pym novels, quotations from poets including Herbert, Pope, and Keats. But I have not traced the phrase to any definite source and therefore wonder whether it is adapted from Austen's remark, here, that Miss Bates had "such an excellent mother" and the implication that her daughter is comparably excellent. But Jane Austen, of course, has invented Miss Bates as a foil for Emma. The novel is told from Emma's point of view, not that of Miss Bates, where Barbara Pym would find her narrative habitation.

The Excellent-Women theme was established in the first two novels and more or less sustained in the next five. An Excellent Woman, even if she does not quite, like Dulcie Mainwaring of *No Fond Return of Love*, in Stevie Smith's words, "gallop about doing good," mainly consecrates herself to doing good, within her little circle, while not doing very well. In *Excellent Women*, the heroine and thorough exemplar of the type, Mildred Lathbury, recounts a conversation with Everard Bone:

"You could consider marrying an excellent woman?" I asked in amazement. "But they are not for marrying."

"You're surely not suggesting that they are for the other

things?" he said, smiling.

That had certainly not occurred to me and I was annoyed to find myself embarrassed.

"They are for being unmarried," I said, "and by that I mean

a positive rather than a negative state."

"Poor things, aren't they allowed to have the normal feelings, then?"

"Oh, yes, but nothing can be done about them."

(pp. 189-90)

The heroine of *Some Tame Gazelle*, the first novel, is the fiftyish spinster Belinda Bede, who, in a small village, loves from afar her pastor Archdeacon Hoccleve, who thirty years before had read poetry to her. Now he is married to bossy Agatha. The main event of the novel is occasioned by Agatha's going on a trip without him. Belinda has the ravishing opportunity to luxuriate in "the normal feelings"—at least, to daydream for a little while that the Archdeacon will turn to her. She does; he does not, except to read to her once more—Spenser, Wordsworth—in his incomparable voice. The bubble of secret desire in an inhibited woman's heart is the central impulse, but representing it is not the main accomplishment, of Barbara Pym's fiction.

Everything the heroine is attached to—everything shoring her up—in nearly all the books is solid, specified, funny, slightly pathetic: her clothes, which tend to be neat, clean, and, in one article, at least, dowdy; the jumble sales at "her" church to which the clothes will someday go, if she can bear to part with that certain, cherished dress; her chicken dish, when the curate comes to dinner; her sustaining tea, her Ovaltine at bedtime; her neighbors, friends, relations, who will include at least one prominent woman, more glamorous or flamboyant or efficient—or bohemian or eccentric—than the heroine: Belinda's buxom sister Harriet—Sensibility in proportion to Belinda's Sense—speaks with authority about fashion, plays the piano, gets proposals, puts her spare time into effectively "strengthening corsets."

Then there are the heroine's books, which tend to be bookish. Belinda has a fondness for Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797–1839), whose lines "Some tame gazelle, or some gentle dove: / Something to love, oh, something to love!" provide the novel's title and epigraph. "Becoming involved in financial difficulties," says the Oxford Companion of Bayly, "he in a short time produced thirty-six pieces for the stage. His verse has been the object of a good deal of ridicule"—as might be Belinda's beloved Archdeacon, who wraps himself in literary melancholy while incessantly coddling himself. His name Hoccleve recalls the fifteenth-century poet John Hoccleve, of whom the Penguin Companion says, firmly, "Except when he is being personal . . . he is dull."

But the unexceptional Archdeacon is something to love, and not to be threatened by, usually. The men in Pym's novels are nearly all, especially the clergymen, waifs in need of constant mothering, and apt to be demanding about it. Excellent women abound; a good man is hard to find. The willingness of Belinda and the heroines of succeeding novels to provide tender decorous care most distinguishes them as Excellent Women. It is no accident, I think, that the beloved clergymen and the beloved poets tend to become associated, the clergymen fond of poets and perhaps bearing poets' names; the young curate whom Harriet pampers is a Mr. Donne. Correspondingly, seventeenth-century poets had a tendency to be clergymen, and are dead.

The name Belinda Bede is a small sign of her small tensions, "Bede" pulling her toward the traditional, conventional world of the Medieval ecclesiastical writer, the Venerable Bede; "Belinda" recalling above all the preeminent coquette of Pope's "Rape of the Lock." The name is an oxymoron—as is the name Barbara Pym. "Pym" summons up the memory of the leader of Puritan parliaments, while, from a comparable standpoint in English history, "Barbara" is most directly associated with a devoted Royalist, the duchess of Cleveland who was mistress to Charles II.

"Cleveland" is underscored elsewhere as the surname of the heroine of Jane and Prudence. Jane—not Austen but Cleveland—wrote her Oxford thesis on the seventeenth-century Royalist poet John Cleveland, who, in his best-known poem, "The Rebel Scot," fulminates, "And where's the stoic can his wrath appease, / To see his country sick of Pym's disease?" Alas, according to Witherspoon and Warnke, Cleveland had "neither the psychological profundity of Donne nor the emotional appropriateness of . . . Lord Herbert." Another item from literary history's jumble sale. Less knowingly than Jane Cleveland, Belinda cherishes "the dear Earl of Rochester." She owns and reads only the chaste Poems on Several Occasions.

The names of Pym characters—of the heroines, at least—tend to have this oxymoronic quality: Jane Cleveland, Mildred Lathbury of Excellent Women (doubly so: "mild strength" Mildred, "town of sticks" Lathbury—reminiscent of the abode of the first little pig), Dulcie Mainwaring of No Fond Return of Love ("Sweety" against the durable Mainwaring; in Less Than Angels Mainwaring is the name of a manipulative, egotistical old anthropological doctor). As early as the second novel, Excellent Women, when we hear of a sermon preached by Archdeacon Hoccleve of Some Tame Gazelle, it becomes clear that it is best to read these books in the order of publication. Characters reappear in later novels. Dulcie learns in passing at one point that the closest thing to a capable man in all of them, Digby Fox of Less Than Angels, has

become a professor of anthropology and married the younger of the two heroines of the earlier novel, Deirdre Swan. (Dulcie has a copy of Some Tame Gazelle, in her bathroom; if she lives on to read A Few Green Leaves, she will remember Digby when he gets up to speak at Esther Clovis' memorial service. But these cross-references are a separate subject. The most delightful return visit is that of Prudence Bates in A Glass of Blessings.)

No oxymoron the romantic name Deirdre Swan, though with marriage she has become reduced to divided selfhood as Deirdre Fox. Self-division in Less Than Angels is provided by the other, older heroine, thirtyish Catherine Oliphant, Deirdre's rival for the affections of the handsome, aristocratic, bland anthropologist Tom Mallow, whom Catherine excellently mothers, doing his laundry for him even after he has moved out. Up to a point, Catherine plays faithful, unforgetting elephant and female martyr to Deirdre's tragic doomed Swan. For Tom dies. Catherine at one point, earlier, sees Tom with Deirdre in a restaurant, Deirdre's hand on his.

Their moussaka would be getting cold, Catherine thought, and then pulled herself up, horrified at the sardonic detachment with which she had been watching them. When her change was brought, she hurried away and back into the flat, where she put down her shopping and the wine and then ran out again with no very clear idea of where she was going. I'm not one of those excellent women, who can just go home and eat a boiled egg and make a cup of tea and be very splendid, she thought, but how useful it would be if I were! (pp. 107–08)

Barbara Pym was so perfect at drawing excellent women in the initially published two novels that she and her readers may have wondered whether she could do anything else. In the next three, Jane and Prudence, Less Than Angels, and A Glass of Blessings, she took on more: heroines who live with a man, in or out of marriage; multiple points of view, the two of Jane and Prudence, the three or four or five of Less Than Angels. In these three books the heroines are less comical, or less exclusively comical. They tend to have an element of Excellent Womanhood about them which they resist or cannot live up to—it may come to the same thing. A ploddingly successful Excellent Woman may walk on as a foil, as Mary Beamish does in A Glass of Blessings. The heroines now bring into prominence a capacity for tart observations, contemplated if not spoken, that was present but less memorable in the earliest novels. And, especially from Less Than Angels on, readers encounter an alternative society, another sort of church, another form of

salvation—that afforded by the dour, seemingly practical and efficient, worldly-wise tribe of anthropologists: a matriarchy, as it turns out, presided over by Esther Clovis.

Yet the anthropologists, in their way, are but old priests translated, and it appears that the gentler spinsters and matrons, the women more or less excellent, of the early novels had typecast the novelist in the eyes of her publisher, who thought old-fashioned the novel rejected in 1963. Almost everything in existence through 1962 looked old-fashioned in 1963. As Philip Larkin writes,

Sexual intercourse began In nineteen sixty-three (Which was rather too late for me)— Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban And the Beatles' first LP.⁶

By the "Annus Mirabilis" of Larkin's poem, novelists had become very unlike Jane Austen, yet direct sexuality had remained, for Barbara Pym's fiction, as much a matter of reticence as it had been in that predecessor's. Pym now seemed too staid; A Very Private Eye shows her concern about the question—and, in 1964, raises an eyebrow over the fact that the publisher who rejected her work would be bringing out a book by John Lennon (p. 225).

Yet in the rejected novel, An Unsuitable Attachment (published in 1982 with some excisions by the literary executor), the heroine acts differently from the others, if not with sensual abandon. Her name is Ianthe Broome; she sweeps relatively clean. (It will be clear, I trust, or become so, that this and other puns are part of the meaning of the books and represent no idle propensity of mine.) Ianthe, a canon's daughter, is younger than most of the other heroines, well turned out, indeed beautiful or close to it, alert, discreet—a model parishioner, the local clergyman surmises. Ianthe has a different opinion:

She saw herself perhaps as an Elizabeth Bowen heroine—for one did not openly identify oneself with Jane Austen's heroines—and To the North was her favorite novel. Even her little house was somehow in keeping with this picture, although it was definitely not St. John's Wood and there was no delicate wrought iron balcony with steps leading down to the green garden. Yet her small garden was green, if only because of much rain and leaves rather than flowers, and there was a little mossy stone cherub left behind by the previous owner. (p. 26)

Actually, Ianthe stands somewhat between, or falls between, these alternately drab and romantic possibilities. Excellent-womanship is not her strength: the elderly spinster she goes to cheer up "had not really

cretly even hoped" (p. 78). Against the hopes of many—her pastor and his wife, her clerical uncle and his wife, her superior in the library where she holds a suitable job—she falls in love with, and marries not a pillar of churchdom but an ex-actor—or ex-extra—five years younger than she, with a lowly job in the library. He is motherably ill at one point but at the end is putting up shelves. Nearly every other man in the novels, except Digby, and Jane's husband, would unquestionably have found the very thought of that too exhausting. Thus Ianthe somewhat boldly marries beneath herself, outside her class; only somewhat boldly, because her upbringing has been so conventional that she magnifies the unconventionality of any departure from its standards.

And there is an unsatisfying peculiarity about this novel. John Challow, Ianthe's choice—Challow echoing Mallow—though usually direct and affectionate when on the scene, is not on it much. There remains a sketchiness about him, like that of George Eliot's Will Ladislaw. Pym's novel is told from a number of the characters' points of view; not John's, however, at all. John becomes that masculine figure, the shelf-maker, through the divine offices of the novelist. The novel is thus more diffuse than the other Pym novels, the changes in the characters and the novelist not deep or fully convincing.

Attentive to names as Barbara Pym was, she may have outdone herself here, for the "Ianthe" set against the humble Broome—besides being linked in the text with Landor's "Pride and Memory"—could be a specific, scholarly reference to Ovid. In the last episode of *Metamor-phoses*, IX, Iphis, disguised as a boy, falls in love with the girl Ianthe, and is finally turned into a male so he may marry her. Something comparable has been done to John Challow.

In other words, though An Unsuitable Attachment has its pleasures, there was some justification for the publisher's disappointment. There is something evasive—"old-fashioned" doesn't describe it—about the novel, the story of a conventional, very-very perfect woman trying to be less so and succeeding, against her timidity—timidity like that which the Excellent Women thrive within, after their fashion. (The Bede sisters turn up again in this novel, now in their seventies, Harriet doing Rome with Mr. Donne's unsteady replacement, Belinda reading "Adonais" [pp. 167–68]; in fact, this novel is thronged with references to characters of the earlier novels, as if Barbara Pym were falling back on them for support. There is even a seemingly very self-conscious moment when an anthropologist defends his profession by "protesting that novelists were just as bad, writing the same book over and over again"

[p. 127].) As I have suggested, Barbara Pym was now—and later—trying to transcend the Excellent-Woman formula by opposing it.

Wives of clergymen, Jane of Jane and Prudence and Sophia of An Unsuitable Attachment, bring excitement to their lives by attempts at matchmaking—like Austen's Emma. In the process, these women become other than excellent, and get nowhere. More startling is the heroine of No Fond Return of Love, which also opposes the Excellent-Woman formula, from inside: the galloping heroine, Dulcie Mainwaring, is an E. W. in shoes heavy enough for a deep-sea diver. Jane was clumsy, but knew it. Dulcie is more so, and does not. Her rationalizations are egregious, stupendous.

The great delight of the novel lies in the dogged, imaginative ardor with which she roves in pursuit of her secret love, the unprepossessing seventeenth-century-literature scholar Aylwin Forbes. In a series of manic sorties, Dulcie, instead of seeking to be with Aylwin, researches him. She looks up details about him in the library, noses about his brother's parish church, then visits the neighborhood where Aylwin's estranged wife lives—and happens upon, and enters, and takes part in, a jumble sale at the wife's mother's house. Finally Dulcie stays at the seaside Fawlty Towers owned and run by Aylwin's mother. Dulcie even finds herself remaining behind a screen there, listening to Aylwin and his wife discuss divorce:

Marjorie let out a nervous giggle, and Dulcie was very much afraid that she might too. It was a dreadful position to find oneself in—that of eavesdropper—and yet she could not help feeling that if anyone had to overhear what was going on it was best that it should be herself, with her genuine interest in Aylwin Forbes—just as a bona fide research worker may be granted access to private letters or diaries considered too shocking to be gloated over by the general public. (p. 218)

There is nothing much like Jane Austen in such curious detachment as this. It is raffish by comparison. Dulcie is the grand exponent of what has emerged as a peculiarly Pymian theme, not mere curiosity but olfactory love: the nosiness of deflected desire. Back in the first novel, Belinda could not prevent herself from watching the Archdeacon's wife take leave of him—watching through a window. (Their farewell kiss must have taken place within the house.) The indelicate Jane had disturbed suitable ladies of the parish as they were sorting the clothes that had belonged to the wife, now dead a year, of the attractive, womanizing Fabian Driver. Other precedents might be cited. But Dulcie follows her nose with relentless determination, actively shaping her

novel as few Pym heroines do. Olfactory love is Barbara Pym's visionary theme. It is a most uninhibted way of developing the subject of inhibition.

"I love finding out about people," Dulcie explains, adding, "I suppose it's a sort of compensation for the dreariness of everyday life" (p. 18). Later—not uncharacteristically, in a manner I shall return to-she reflects on the uselessness of her literary education, as she sees it: "And really what did it mean? A sentimental penchant for King Charles the First or even Napoleon, or a liking for the poetry of Marvell, Keats, or Matthew Arnold? That is what it had been with her.... And now she was making indexes and doing little bits of research for people with more original minds than herself" (p. 50). She can take things apart but cannot put them together, except when inventively acting out her passion. "It seemed . . . so much safer and more comfortable to live in the lives of other people—to observe their joys and sorrows with detachment as if one were watching a film or a play. 'Perhaps,' she went on [speaking now to her associate conspirator], 'we might ask Aylwin to come in one evening—for a drink on his way home?" (p. 108). That suggestion of a category of innocuous getting-together, such a natural category, even if he could not possibly pass Dulcie's house "on his way home"; that is imaginative.

But after No Fond Return of Love came the sixteen-year hiatus, and then the spare, elegantly organized, musically developed Quartet in Autumn, the account, from four points of view, of four single lives: those of two elderly men and two elderly women who retire from an office and must occupy and solace themselves as best they can. They must live within severe restrictions, but not only the fantastic inhibitions that restrained the younger, funnier protagonists of earlier Pym novels. Church-hopping Edwin is an Excellent Man, Letty the least idiosyncratic of the quartet. There is more bleakness here than before. Yet even this novel is redolent of olfactory love—that of cranky Norman, who finds himself taking the bus out to Clapham Common, where he looks at Marcia's house, and watches Marcia tending her sad and ominous collection of rinsed-out milk bottles, but does not speak to her. Nor does she speak to him, though she will leave him her house, her bottles, and her large collection of canned food. She will starve to death, unwilling to disturb her collection. But before dying she takes a bus herself, to the neighborhood of her adored surgeon, Mr. Strong, and gazes at his house—a second time. She dies, smiling, casting a lingering look at his beatific face-she a simple soul taking flight: "Marcia remembered what her mother used to say, how she would never let the

surgeon's knife touch her body. How ridiculous that seemed when one considered Mr. Strong. . . . Marcia smiled and the frown left his face and he seemed to be smiling back at her" (p. 181).

Putting it mildly, Marcia is too self-absorbed to be an Excellent Woman-not detached but withdrawn; in the next novel, The Sweet Dove Died, we have the saga of the kind of woman upon whom Excellent Women might gaze, covertly, nosily, with repressed envy or anger, from afar. She is the formidable Leonora Eyre, of sublime, un-Austenian, operatic name, hard and perfect as a vase and, in the long run, committed to retrieving her favorite, much younger, young man, James, from the clutches of his lover, Ned. She had earlier driven away James's gangly girfriend. Reversing Pym's formula, Leonora is the Wicked Woman, as in "Be more wicked"—or whatever the very opposite of an Excellent Woman should be called (there is a minor precedent in Allegra Gray, Excellent Women's calculating clergy-hunter). This novel has neither clergymen nor anthropologists. Leonora, described mainly, though satirically, from her own point of view, is perhaps the Pym heroine who will most directly catch the interest of readers as she runs her hell-bent course. Yet though she behaves very selfishly, she does so not without raising some sympathetic feeling in the author and the reader. That Pym's formulas, from the earliest books on, whether applied positively or negatively, do not overwhelm the characters, becomes particularly apparent when the books are reread.

Leonora's more ordinary friend, Liz, naturally counsels prudence, restraint; and naturally does so with mixed feelings:

"I wouldn't trust Ned any further than I could throw him," said Liz rather smugly.

"Well, it's hardly a question of trusting him, is it?"

"Oh, no—we're well out of it, my dear." Liz spoke with the detachment of one who is past all emotional involvements, and by including Leonora with herself she was perhaps trying to warn her to draw back while there was still time. Yet another part of her wanted her to go on, to find out whether it was possible for the cold, proud and well-organised Leonora to suffer as she had suffered and so to provide an interesting spectacle, a kind of diversion from the boredom of everyday life. (p. 153)

The word "detachment" recurs in Barbara Pym, and not only in the context of anthropologists. Here Leonora's friend speaks "with . . . detachment," but against some of her feelings. Dulcie thinks she enjoys observing other people's "joys and sorrows with detachment." Catherine

Oliphant is shocked by her own momentary "sardonic detachment"; the word appears regularly in Less Than Angels. Not to multiply examples, I would cite also the moment when the heroine of A Glass of Blessings chides herself for an instance of "unsuitable detachment" (p. 18). What is unsuitable, in the title of the rejected novel, is an Attachment. Barbara Pym singled out a sort of anthropological detachment in Austen's novels as the most appealing quality about them—though the definition of anthropology was not entirely detached, embracing what it did.

We can pause, profitably, for a moment to explore the term. What it generally means in the present context, as we all sense, is a state of distance from central human feelings. A recent review conveniently describes detachment as the book in question applies the term to Victorian novelists, who were putatively unable "to admit the truth, to scrutinize the 'pressures' under which the superego suffers" and hence "draw distorted, 'flattened' figures who are permitted only 'the most limited range of fantasies and impulses.' Because they dared not probe the 'dreads and desires,' the 'incestuous and aggressive wishes,' the sexual fantasies and impulses which constitute real 'inner life' of human beings, Victorian novelists showed only the 'social masks' of people and nothing of the rebel who remains alive enough to assert himself against 'communal values.' "7 In other words, those novelists are accused of censoring, bowderlizing, or otherwise avoiding and thereby betraying the inner lives of their characters.

Now, leaving aside the Victorian novelists, such a charge cannot justly be lodged against Barbara Pym. Even regarding the Excellent-Women characters, the point of view of the novelist is not detached, for the most part. Further, detachment is not primarily a technique in Pym's novels but a theme. It is the characters who are detached, or who seek detachment, not the novelist who represents them. That is why the subject and the word "detachment" recur.

Perhaps the clearest example is provided by the fifth novel, A Glass of Blessings, which happens to be the Pym novel most in accordance with a prominent Austen convention. Wilmet Forsyth—"handsome, clever, and rich," but the bored wife of a man in the government—imagines other men are in love with her, as Austen's Emma imagines love-lives for her acquaintances. Wilmet, thinking she is pursued, considers olfactory "detective work" (p. 169) but does not become deeply involved in it, right away. And as in Emma, the narrative point of view is neatly and ironically concentrated in the mind of the fantasist heroine. I would read her name as "Willed Foresight," or voluntary delusion, in the terminology of Jane Austen and Samuel Johnson. (The uncom-

prehending patroness of the anthropologists in Less Than Angels, the preceding novel, has the name Minnie Foresight. Wilmet's mother-in-law, a very knowing and capable person, is Sybil Forsyth.)

One of Wilmet's potential lovers calls attention to the oxymoronic

nature of Pym's names when he muses,

"But Wilmet, life is like that, you know. Like your name—so sad, and you so gay and poised."

I liked this description of myself and longed for him to say

more.

"Did you know that my name came out of one of Charlotte M. Yonge's novels?" I asked him. "My mother was very fond of them. But why do you think it sad?"

"Because it seems to be neither one thing nor the other," he

said, rather mysteriously, and then fell silent.

(p. 72)

That Wilmet's name and the oxymoronic names of other Pym heroines are "neither one thing nor the other" is a persistent sign of the tensions involved in these characters' peculiar detachment and in the consequently peculiar associational activity of their minds.

Wilmet's first-person narrative is distinctive, worked-up, ordered, just so. Everything, everybody, every word or gesture, she finds just the right-sized box for. She classifies every aspect of her experience immediately, labeling and filing every item, foreshadowing Dulcie's indexing and recalling a thought of Catherine Oliphant's: "Understanding somebody else's filing system is just about as easy as really getting to know another human being" (p. 109).

For example (I quote from another scene in which Wilmet talks with a potential lover): "We met at a rather masculine sort of restaurant"—not just a restaurant but masculine, indeed rather masculine. The system of classification has a range or spectrum of degrees of masculinity applied to restaurants. And not just a rather masculine restaurant but a "rather masculine sort of restaurant." There is often, in Pym characters' ruminations, a flat, unnecessary note: the stylistic equivalent of keeping one foot on the floor. But the sentence proceeds, tying the restaurant's portfolio: "a rather masculine sort of restaurant, famed for its meat"—men, those carnivores (despite just about all the evidence in Wilmet's experience and in the whole Pym canon)—and more: "famed for its meat, where great joints were wheeled up to the table": not mere joints, large as they would be, but "great" joints—a hecatomb—needing to be wheeled to the table. Why? Of course, "for one's choice," the sentence goes on; and it does not end yet: "for one's

choice and approval." This is Aristotle as restaurant critic, what the place offers defined in its causes, material, efficient, formal, and final.

And the description goes on, becoming still more urbane and even anthropological: "This ritual seemed to take the place of the ordeal by fire which the more foreign restaurants went in for, where every dish apparently had to submit itself to being heated up in the leaping flames while the patrons looked nervously on." The modifiers have been chosen and distributed with care, very deliberately; there is a sprightly personification, of dishes as submissive victims. "When the joint came to us I found myself turning aside": note the empiricism of that expression, the detached observation, behaviorism even. She does not intentionally avert her eyes but observes that she is doing so. And she is not merely "turning aside" but doing so in a classifiable manner: "with a kind of womanly delicacy" (genus: delicacy; species: womanly; flat, now casual subspecies: "a kind of"). She continues, sprightly again, personifying the joint still ("hardly able to look it in the face"), then probing for the cause: "for there was something almost indecent about the sight of meat in such abundance." Again the careful discriminations: "almost," "in such abundance." And then, closing the short paragraph, the recurrent flat note plus the empiricism plus the lyricism plus the classifications and nicer demarcations: "All the same [flat] it was very splendid [lyrical] beef [classification] and I found myself eating it with enjoyment [empiricism], even relish [toward more precise discrimination]."

The restaurant being a poetic figure for the tête-à-tête (as Wilmet is pleased to call it), and the joint having something in common with Wilmet herself, for one, in the circumstances, we are not surprised to find her applying the same methods to her somewhat prosaic companion Harry. "'Do you remember the Fleet Club in Napoli?' asked Harry, rather sentimentally," Wilmet says. He then suggests—adding it "tentatively," she says—that life may not have turned out as she had wished; and that "there can be—there often are—things one can do about it." (The last phrase recalls Mildred Lathbury's Excellent statement that "nothing can be done about" normal feelings. Wilmet is on exactly that brink—as the determined Jessie had been in *Jane and Prudence* [p. 139].) Harry proceeds:

"You know, I did want to have lunch with you, Wilmet," he said earnestly. "I should like us to have fun together—I believe we could."

"Do you think so?" I said rather coldly. Then I suddenly thought—why, it's only old Harry Grinners, whom you've known

for ten years, no need to treat him with such chilly detachment! "Endless good lunches with lots of lovely meat?" I said more gaily. "Is that the idea?"

"Darling, you will have your joke-that's the surprising and

tantalizing thing about you."

From then on he became more obviously flirtatious in a heavy Edwardian style....

(pp. 88-89)

That is, regarding the last clause: he was—no, "became"—what? "flirtatious"—no, "obviously"; no, "more obviously" flirtatious; and in a certain style, for those urbane enough to notice: an "Edwardian" style, but a "heavy" one. Then there is more than one sort of heavy Edwardian style? Yes; not "Have some Madeira, m'dear." (The Flanders and Swann line would surface in *An Unsuitable Attachment* [p. 76].)

Wilmet's mind is a great, mobile, unwieldy general archive of pigeonholes of her own devising, and even when she resolves not to be detached she persists in filing every stimulus as it comes along—for us, for Harry, for herself—while she oscillates between little fits of lyrical nervous energy and excitement—being "light, and bright, and sparkling," like a guest on a talk show—and feeling with an occasional lifeless word for the stability of the floorboards.

This passage is representative of Pym's writing throughout the novels, though a little more prominent here (and in Excellent Women) because the narrative is in the first person. The passage gives a fair example of Pym's particular detachment—indeed, not uncharacteristically, a scene in which a character reflects on detachment. But who is detached? The character: trying to be, trying to detach herself from everything and everyone, including herself, by labeling everything in what she takes to be a natural, correct, and appealing manner. Harry does it too. It is not the novelist who is detached. The novelist is registering the tremor in every nervous classificatory word, inside Wilmet completely (but not exclusively), tremblingly alive in just the way Wilmet will not let herself be, or will not realize she is, against her detachment, in spite of herself.

And the novelist's characteristic manner of being attached to the would-be detached is demonstrated regularly in the third-person narratives. Every predication in the novels (including literary references) tends to represent an interpretable fantasy (including "defenses") by the characters, from the humor and poignancy of which the novelist does not detach or defend herself. The defenses being commonly against candid sexual thoughts—Wilmet as "lovely meat," not unlike

Marcia under the surgeon's knife or unreminiscent of Ianthe's garden—the inner, associational life is constantly before us.

I conclude with some complementary remarks about A Few Green Leaves, Barbara Pym's last novel. Without suggesting that such an effect was necessarily intended, I would say the novel recapitulates all the themes, or most of them, explored in the other novels, doing so not regressively but generously. A good many of the earlier characters are referred to in it. The setting is a little village. Tom Dagnall, the pastor, is an antiquarian who rambles about the woods looking for the D.M.V., the Deserted Medieval Village—where, one imagines, half of him might be happier than among the living; the other half is drawn toward the heroine. The "Deserted Village" recalls Goldsmith's sentimental-ironical poem and also—a favorite of Archdeacon Hoccleve's—Gray's "Elegy," a poem which set a standard for quite undetached detachment.

Tom has the mixed satisfaction of seeing his daft sister, Greece-loving Daphne, move away to what seems to her, temporarily, a more comfortable home. Tom's wife, Laura, died some years back. He is stranded, mythologically, between dead Laura and living, sere Daphne, whom Apollo has not pursued; she sprouts a few green leaves, though, in acquiring what she always wanted, a dog (possibly a low joke there). She is an Excellent Woman, she thinks, who has given Tom the best years of her life.

So, at first, seems the heroine, but she is working, more or less, on an anthropological project. Happening to see an old flame on television, she writes to him, a flaring up of impulse that surprises her. He turns up and later rents a cottage in the woods, the Keeper's Lodge—a post-1963, *Chatterley* note—in which to finish his anthropological book. The heroine puts on a new dress, visits him with a casserole, and they—mirabile dictu—make love, to some unspecified extent, in the grass. One of the neighbors of course happens to wander by and notices them at it. Graham Pettifer, the anthropologist, goes back to his wife. The heroine decides she may yet marry.

This novel was germinating a long time. A Very Private Eye suggests the theme, for a possible novel, as early as 1962: "A woman living in the country who has had a hopeless love for a man... then, when he is free she finds that after all he means nothing to her..." (p. 206). Barbara Pym's retirement from the Institute in 1974, when she took up residence in the small Oxfordshire village of Finstock, had, in a sense, brought her full circle: "28 June [1975]. When I wrote Some Tame

Gazelle I didn't know nearly as much about village life as I do now" (p. 283).

The heroine of A Few Green Leaves has just come to live in the village as the novel opens. Her name is Emma, recalling Austen—but Emma Howick, not Woodhouse (wick signifies town, among other things; "how fit in?"—or possibly "how to burn"?). The Austen novel of which A Few Green Leaves most reminds me, however, is Persuasion—her last complete novel—about a woman past her bloom, twenty-seven-year-old Anne Elliot. Anne's business is to regain the affection of a suitor given up for prudential reasons eight years before. There's a hint of something similar in Emma Howick's impulsive letter-writing. But the point I wish to examine and emphasize is the quality of Emma's thinking, which is significantly both like and unlike the idiosyncratic, detached mental card-indexing typical of Pym's more or less Excellent Women.

One blunt shorthand definition of the novel as a form is to say it presents characters sinking into delusion, in realistic circumstances. It is not entirely misleading to say that whereas novelists are allowed some useful knowledge of psychology, novelists' characters are not. But one of the extraordinary things about *Persuasion* is that Anne Elliot knows her mind exceptionally well. She is deftly attentive to her own associations of ideas, as well as to those of the characters surrounding her. She is wary of, not unnaturally insusceptible to, but generally proof against just the delusion, voluntary delusion, that characterizes Wilmet Forsyth and commonly gives novelists something for their characters to do.8

It is in this respect that Barbara Pym, especially in *A Few Green Leaves*, really calls for comparison with Jane Austen, in a way that is profitable. That is, knowing what Austen does, subtly, helps us see a comparable subtlety in Pym. Emma's ability to perceive associations shows her mental superiority to Dulcie, who could find no real worth in her literary education, education which requires the cultivation of associational sensitivity. (*A Very Private Eye* shows Barbara Pym repeatedly attentive to associations [pp. 121, 156, 175, 178].)

Notice Emma's alertness, about country matters, when she falls into conversation on the bus with rustic Mrs. Dyer—whose name recalls that of an eighteenth-century georgic and topographic poet.

... "Not got your car today, Miss Howick?"

"No, it's being serviced."

For some reason this seemed to amuse Mrs. Dyer and the woman sitting next to her. Emma wondered if her words had suggested some activity of deep rural significance, her thoughts

dwelling briefly on cows and bulls, but she preferred not to speculate.

Nor was Mrs. Dyer's next question any less embarrassing. "How's that friend of yours getting on in Keeper's Lodge?" she asked. "He's lucky to have you taking food to him."

This was of course a reference to Emma having been seen

taking a casserole to Graham one evening.

(pp. 138-39)

A small village is the perfect locale for general, requited olfactory activity.

Emma is, as I have said, as capable in attending to her own mental associations, her own initially not quite conscious thought processes. She sees through Tom's euphemistic pastoral letter pleading, after his sister has decamped, for invitations to "a simple family meal." She recognizes his feeble attempt to play counterpoint for Excellent Women. But like Anne Elliot's thoughts, Emma's proceed past Tom's peculiarities to her own. She

... didn't see herself offering any practical help to Tom. It was a mistaken and old-fashioned concept, the helplessness of men, the kind that could only flourish in a village years behind the times. Yet she couldn't help feeling sorry for Tom, pitying him even, and once you started on those lines there was no knowing what it might lead to. (p. 145)

Repeatedly the novel shows her pausing to have a look at what she is thinking, or to wonder why she has just said or done something—for example, her walking off with Graham's wife's umbrella. "It was," she had reflected earlier, "a mistake to suppose that every human activity was related to sex, whatever Freud might say" (p. 77); later she tells her mother, ". . . I got Claudia's umbrella by mistake-one of those ludicrous things that happen sometimes, reducing everything to the level of farce" (p. 163). Extraordinary novel-characters remain undetached from their deep imaginings-and "mistakes"-while somewhat detachedly examining them. Tom remarks that a seventeenth-century antiquarian discovered "a particularly interesting stone" at an estate the characters are visiting. "It had borne a shape closely resembling the female pudenda, he remembered, but did not mention this" (p. 167). The topic recedes from his consciousness. On the next page, Emma, undoubtedly with more awareness of herself, thinks she might "take a pot of bramble jelly to Tom after all, if the next lot turned out well."

Such a correspondence, from different points of view, is a key to the force and beauty of the novel as a whole, and of the Pym novels taken together, but perhaps this novel above all. Quartet in Autumn had, I think, achieved the most in this respect before, as in the repeated comment, by Marcia, and others, that she was "never a big eater" (pp. 111, 132, 153, etc.) and in the way characters find "moral support" in friendship and gin (pp. 186, 150). In A Few Green Leaves, there are many points of view, many potential "loose ends." Everyone in the book is dancing, to a different tune for the most part inaudible to everyone else. Yet the novelist brings out harmonies. The result is poetic, at times with quite unpromising materials: for example, Daphne and her dog at the vet's:

"Come on, Bruce," she said, "let the doctor take your paw." The vet laughed. "Funny, my name's Bruce too," he said. (p. 212)

Poetry is the result largely because everything in the novel comes up, significantly, at least twice. There are two or more, associated Bruces, two or more of everything. "Tom's a-cold," Emma thinks in another place, about Tom Dagnall—likening him to Edgar, in *Lear*, wandering dottily in the wilderness (p. 38). But Tom Dagnall, prowling the woods at night, also has something in common with the elderly doctor's unneutered tomcat. This poetic parallelism, of elements within the novel and both within and without it, has precedents as early as Harriet's "Apes of Brazil" joke in *Some Tame Gazelle* (pp. 55, 77–78). Expanded and emphasized in some of the later novels, the technique may be thought of as a redirection of the symphonic impulse that led Pym to reemploy characters.

A Glass of Blessings has a prominent, cumulative poetic image. Toward the end, Wilmet, the wife whose thoughts have strayed from her husband, wanders into a green place that reminds her of "To His Coy Mistress" but may chiefly remind the reader of other Marvell verses, not only "The Garden" but also the description of the wood in "Upon Appleton House," with that poem's sensual, errant daydreams. Evidently attracted by the scent of apple trees and decaying greenery, the local bees swarm—as if out of the fourth book of Virgil's Georgics, where bees provide an emblem of the well-regulated state, and where bruised leaves and flowers draw a swarm back to the hive. Queen Wilmet's thoughts return to her husband. The events in an emblematic landscape recall those in the garden at Sotherton, of Austen's Mansfield Park, and constitute the most elaborate poetic moment in Pym's novels before A Few Green Leaves.

There, in the last novel, though, the poetry is pervasive. The wood outside the village is the country churchyard, the waste land, the dark

wood, the green world, and Little Gidding. "Sangreal Copse" discloses an abandoned chickencoop (p. 171). The funniest, repeated nonsense is the way everyone is always wandering about in the woods, bumping into each other as if in Arden, or en route to Canterbury, repeating themselves, covering themselves—as if with green leaves—giving themselves away. The really selfish people depart, Graham back to his wife. Beginning to fondle Emma on that one occason, he had said: "This is rather pleasant, isn't it," and then, "'I feel I deserve a break from my work,' he added, as if being with her could be no more than that" (p. 148). The Pettifers have their reward.

Even in a small village, nearly everything is everywhere, however, for those with the wit to make connections. In Austen's *Persuasion*, there is fruitful repetition, especially in the second springtime that comes to Anne, in November. Here, "Roses in November, that's really something!" Tom exclaims to the elderly woman decorating the church, who knows how to add "a few green leaves" (p. 202). Emma renounces the impressive single-mindedness of the anthropologists to become possibly a novelist, able as she is to take so much in—Barbara Pym herself possibly taking, in this final novel, a retrospective view of her creation, her indebtednesses, her distinctivenesses, and seeing they were good.

"I feel I deserve a break from my work," Graham had explained, and then Emma had thought, not for our benefit—and a little flatfootedly—"as if being with her could be no more than that."

At the end of the radio talk I have mentioned, Barbara Pym spoke of the kind of immortality most writers would wish for, that of having a distinctive voice, of having written works in a style "immediately recognizable as having been written by them, and by nobody else." This remark suggests that in the long run she did not aspire to be Jane Austen *rediviva*, grateful as she was to her.

That superfluous explanatory clause of Emma's, about Graham's motives, is another sign of Barbara Pym's special voice—of the characteristic investment of her passion. Emma thinks the clause for her use, not ours. "As if being with her could be no more than that"; such is the category, she thinks, in which he mentally places her. That, she thinks, is his detached way of keeping detached from her. She may seem detached herself in seeing his motives so objectively, probably so accurately. She is ordering, putting away, filing, his detached treatment of her. Thus anthropology studies man embracing woman: the male anthropologist in the grass, embracing the female anthropologist, she studying him studying her.

But the effect of the heroine's detached thought about his detachment, as the novelist gives it to us, is quite the opposite. "As if being with her could be no more than that": the thought Emma puts in Graham's head as if it were not what she herself is worried about—her distancing clause—lays open her heart.

¹ The ten published novels, in order of composition, are as follows (the date given first in each entry is that of initial publication, the second date being that of American publication [New York: Dutton], the editions cited here): Some Tame Gazelle (1950, 1983); Excellent Women (1952, 1978); Jane and Prudence (1953, 1981); Less Than Angels (1955, 1980); A Glass of Blessings (1958, 1980); No Fond Return of Love (1961, 1982); An Unsuitable Attachment, rev. Hazel Holt (1982, 1982); The Sweet Dove Died (1978, 1979); Quartet in Autumn (1977, 1978); A Few Green Leaves (1980, 1980). As early as 1971, Barbara Pym's friend Robert Smith noted her reviewers' habit of drawing the Austen parallel, in "How Pleasant to Know Miss Pym," Ariel, 4:63.

² Barbara Pym, A Very Private Eye: An Autobiography in Diaries and Letters, ed.

Hazel Holt and Hilary Pym (New York: Dutton, 1984).

³ Charles Burkhart, "Barbara Pym and the Africans," Twentieth Century Literature, 29 (1983), 50-51.

⁴ The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. R. W. Chapman, IV (3rd ed.; London:

Oxford Univ. Press, 1933), p. 21.

⁵ See Lotus Snow, "The Trivial Round, the Common Task: Barbara Pym's Novels," *Research Studies*, 48 (1980), 83–93, and, on the representation of women in the novels, Barbara Brothers, "Women Victimised by Fiction: Living and Loving in the Novels by Barbara Pym," in *Twentieth-Century Women Novelists*, ed. Thomas F. Staley (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1982), pp. 61–80.

⁶ Philip Larkin, High Windows (New York: Farrar, 1974), p. 34.

⁷ Shirley Robin Letwin, review of Baruch Hochman's The Test of Character: From the Victorian Novel to the Modern, Times Literary Supplement (December 30,

1983), p. 1447.

⁸ My general observations about Austen, Johnson, and fiction are supported in *The Chain of Becoming: The Philosophical Tale, the Novel, and a Neglected Realism of the Enlightenment: Swift, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Johnson, and Austen (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1983).*

Nietzsche's Theory of Tragedy in the Plays of T. S. Eliot

LINDA LEAVELL

Nietzsche—a nineteenth-century philosopher passionately concerned with culture, myth, ritual, and Greek tragedy; Eliot—a twentieth-century philosophy student likewise devoted throughout his career to culture, myth, ritual, and Greek tragedy; yet Eliot hardly ever refers to Nietzsche in his published work. In one rare instance when he does so, in a review of a book about Nietzsche, rather than acknowledge indebtedness, he censures: "Nietzsche is one of those writers whose philosophy evaporates when detached from its literary qualities, and whose literature owes its charm not alone to the personality and wisdom of the man, but to a claim to scientific truth." Then after pointedly dismissing Nietzsche's theories of war, knowledge, the universe, and ethics, Eliot nevertheless concludes his review by regretting "the omission of any account of Nietzsche's views on art," suggesting at least some interest in Nietzsche's aesthetic theories.

Most scholars would agree with Eliot that Nietzsche is far from scientific in his method, especially in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche's first book, but in spite of its lack of evidence, the hypothesis of *The Birth of Tragedy* proved so provocative that certain anthropologists, notably Frazer, Harrison, and Cornford, tried to substantiate it scientifically by documenting the myths and rituals of various cultures. However much Eliot may discount Nietzsche's claim to scientific truth, he was clearly impressed by the anthropologists who tried to prove that claim. That Eliot was stimulated by Frazer's *The Golden Bough* we know from the notes to *The Waste Land*; that he was aware of Harrison's and Cornford's works on ritual and the origins of tragedy we know from his reference in "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" to "the (extremely in-

teresting) works of Miss Harrison or Mr. Cornford," and "the antics of the Todas and the Veddahs." But regardless of the question of influence, direct or indirect, acknowledged or not, the parallels between Nietzsche's and Eliot's views of tragedy deserve more attention than they have yet received. Examining Eliot's plays alongside *The Birth of Tragedy* should elucidate both Eliot's theoretical motivation for writing poetic drama and the practical limitations he faced in executing such a theory.

A question which seems immediately to arise from this discussion of Nietzsche and Eliot is whether The Birth of Tragedy, which describes only ancient tragedy, can be used to describe the plays of a modern writer, only one of which is indisputably a tragedy. Nietzsche's purpose, it seems, in writing The Birth of Tragedy was not only to describe the origins of Greek tragedy but to challenge his contemporaries to recreate the same spiritual unity between art and society that the Greeks had. Whether directly or indirectly, Eliot accepted Nietzsche's challenge but learned through his experience on the commercial stage that tragedy as a religious rite demands a religious audience in order to achieve the effect that tragedy had for the Greeks. After Murder in the Cathedral, however, Eliot was no longer content with a strictly religious audience and thus sought a dramatic form that would appeal to a general audience and still create as much ritual as the commercial stage would permit. This is not to say that Eliot compromised his artistic goals for commercial interests but that reaching as broad an audience as possible was essential to his aesthetic purpose.

Although Murder in the Cathedral is Eliot's purest tragedy and probably comes closer to achieving a ritualistic unity between the performance and the audience than any play since Shakespeare, or possibly even the Greeks, its effective audience is limited to Christian believers and thus for Eliot it was only a partial success. The most commercially successful of Eliot's plays, The Cocktail Party, presents a surface of drawing-room comedy but nevertheless retains a profound counterpoint of tragedy. By attaining as even a balance as possible between ritual and commercial appeal, The Cocktail Party becomes the most successful of Eliot's plays in the context of Nietzsche's challenge and Eliot's own aspirations. In Eliot's subsequent plays, The Confidential Clerk and The Elder Statesman, the balance is offset in the direction of popular appeal so that much, though certainly not all, of the poetic density and spiritual complexity of the earlier plays is smoothed out. The Family Reunion falls somewhere between Murder in the Cathedral and The Cocktail Party so that while it is an intriguing poetic drama in its own

right, it has neither the exclusive audience of the earlier play nor the popular appeal of the later play. Since this discussion concerns Eliot's departure from tragedy only insofar as he found it necessary to attract modern audiences to the rites of tragedy, I will focus on Eliot's first three full-length plays, Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion, and

The Cocktail Party.

Behind both Nietzsche's and Eliot's dramatic theories is the presupposition that contemporary society lacks cultural unity and that cultural unity is directly dependent upon a fundamental myth. Even before his Anglican conversion, Eliot perceived the need in our increasingly heterogeneous and secular society for a cultural myth and in The Waste Land calls forth forgotten myths as a means to aesthetic unity. After his conversion, the myth toward which Eliot called society is more specifically, though not exclusively, Christian. Eliot's two series of lectures, The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes towards the Definition of Culture, urge cultural unity through a return to Christian values. The myth toward which Nietzsche called society, though much less rational than Christianity, was likewise for him fundamental to cultural unity. Nietzsche's statement below is in perfect agreement with Eliot's views:

Yet every culture that has lost myth has lost, by the same token, its natural, healthy creativity. Only a horizon ringed about with myths can unify a culture. . . . The images of myth must be the daemonic guardians, ubiquitous but unnoticed, presiding over the growth of the child's mind and interpreting to the mature man his life and struggles.⁵

(Could Eliot have had such a statement in mind when creating his Guardians for *The Cocktail Party?*) According to Nietzsche, Socrates represents the decadence of Greek culture and the loss of myth. If Germany is to regain cultural unity, he contends, it must move in the reverse direction of the Greeks, moving backward from the rational Alexandrian age to the mythic, Dionysiac age of tragedy. Thus, he challenges Germany:

Indeed, my friends, believe with me in this Dionysiac life and in the rebirth of tragedy! Socratic man has run his course; crown your heads with ivy, seize the thyrsus, and do not be surprised if tiger and panther lie down and caress your feet! Dare to lead the life of tragic man, and you will be redeemed Gird yourselves for a severe conflict, but have faith in the thaumaturgy of your god! (p. 124)

Eliot indirectly accepted the social mission of Nietzsche's challenge by putting his poetry on the stage, where he thought it would most successfully reach society. Carol Smith agrees that the social mission

Eliot conceived for himself as a poet is the most important reason for his turning to the writing of plays. She quotes Eliot from *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*:

The most useful poetry, socially, would be one which could cut across all the present stratifications of public taste—stratifications which are perhaps a sign of social disintegration. The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social "usefulness" for poetry, is the theatre.⁶

The full title of Nietzsche's work, The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music, indicates the important relationship in Nietzsche's theory between tragedy and music. It was the Dionysiac spirit of music (not Apollonian music) which revived the decaying myth of the Greeks. "What was the power that rescued Prometheus from his vultures and transformed myth into a vehicle of Dionysiac wisdom?" asks Nietzsche. "It was the Heraclean power of music, which reached its highest form in tragedy and endowed myth with a new and profound significance" (p. 68). Although "Melody gives birth to poetry again and again," music remains essentially Dionysian—"Music alone allows us to understand the delight felt at the annihilation of the individual"—while poetry, by bringing into focus image, language, and myth, becomes essentially Apollonian (pp. 43, 101). Thus, in tragedy music and poetry maintain an integral complementary relationship, which Nietzsche describes:

Myth shields us from music while at the same time giving music its maximum freedom. In exchange, music endows the tragic myth with a convincing metaphysical significance, which the unsupported word and image could never achieve, and, moreover, assures the spectator of a supreme delight—though the way passes through annihilation and negation, so that he is made to feel that the very womb of things speaks audibly to him.

(p. 126)

For Eliot the relationship between poetry and music is perhaps not so complex as for Nietzsche though it is similar. Eliot admits in "The Music of Poetry" that the rhythm and the structure of music sometimes give birth to poetry: "But I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image." When music is mentioned in the plays, it suggests a realm, if not purely Dionysian, at least spiritually real in contrast to Apollonian illusion and perhaps unknowable or unspeakable; the Chorus of *The Family Reunion* says:

And we know nothing of exorcism And whether in Argos or England There are certain inflexible laws Unalterable, in the nature of music.8

And in *The Confidential Clerk* Colby and his real father, the musicians, are much closer to spiritual reality than is the Apollonian potter, Sir Claude. Like Nietzsche, Eliot envisions music, in "Poetry and Drama," as something entirely beyond poetry, "We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry," and yet he finds in great dramatic poetry, such as the plays of Shakespeare, "a kind of musical design . . . which reinforces and is one with the dramatic movement." Though the presence of music becomes less overt in Eliot's later plays than in the early ones like *Sweeney Agonistes*, which Eliot suggested should be performed to drum taps, Eliot retains a strong sense of "musical design" throughout all his plays and thus seems to concur with Nietzsche's assertion that "music is the true idea of the cosmos, drama but a reflection of that idea" (p. 130).

And in order "to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order," Eliot writes, "I have before my eyes a kind of mirage of the perfection of verse drama." Only through "dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity," he writes, can "we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express." Like the "musical design," and absolutely essential to it, verse becomes increasingly less overt in Eliot's plays but is never forsaken for prose. At the same time that Eliot believed in the necessity of verse in his plays and insisted "that verse is not merely a formalization, or an added decoration, but that it intensifies the drama," he was afraid that like the chorus and the Furies, verse would alienate audiences accustomed to realistic theater. Thus, his full-length plays demonstrate, on the one hand, a movement toward more realistic speech and, on the other hand, a movement away from poetic intensity.

E. Martin Browne observes that even in the revisions of *The Cocktail Party* Eliot turned more and more to direct statement and away from imagery and evocative phrasing.¹² The commercial success of *The Cocktail Party* suggests that Eliot was prudent to eliminate the choral odes and lyrical duets, however beautiful, but that the public could tolerate a good deal more poetic intensity than Eliot seems to have given it credit for in his last two plays. In his exceptionally thorough chapter on poetic drama, David Jones describes the rhythm of verse as being hypnotic and thus capable of yielding "a kind of sensuous apprehension of experience not available to prose." He continues, "It seems, for instance, as if only through poetry can the deep reserves of

significance in myth be tapped."¹³ Although Eliot eventually abandoned strictly tragic plots, choral odes, and Furies, he never forsook his mission, toward which verse was necessary, to get as close to myth and music as his ever-widening public would permit. For he says in "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry": "The tendency, at any rate, of prose drama is to emphasize the ephemeral and superficial; if we want to get at the permanent and universal we tend to express ourselves in verse."¹⁴

The aspect of Nietzsche's theory which was most stimulating to anthropologists is the idea of tragedy as ritual. They put tragedy in the context of primitive fertility rituals, where the tragic hero or similar king-like figure must be sacrificed in order for society to be cleansed and the lands to become fertile again. Such themes are clearly present in Greek tragedies and are to some extent in Eliot's plays. But what is more significant to Nietzsche and, I think, to Eliot as well is the idea of the theater experience itself as ritual. Nietzsche writes that "projecting oneself outside oneself and then acting as though one had really entered another body, another character . . . constitutes the first step in the evolution of drama" (p. 55). Furthermore, what is to some extent true in all drama was especially so in Greek tragedy in the relationship between the audience and the satyr chorus, which Nietzsche describes:

Audience and chorus were never fundamentally set over against each other: all was one grand chorus of dancing, singing satyrs, and of those who let themselves be represented by them. . . . An audience of spectators, such as we know it, was unknown to the Greeks. Given the terraced structure of the Greek theater, rising in concentric arcs, each spectator could quite literally survey the entire cultural world about him and imagine himself, in the fullness of seeing, as a chorist. (p. 54)

Necessary to this ritual experience between audience and chorus is enchantment, which Nietzsche calls "the precondition of all dramatic art." "In this enchantment," he writes, "the Dionysiac reveler sees himself as satyr, and as satyr, in turn, he sees the god" (p. 56). Enchantment, however, in Nietzsche's sense of the word, hardly describes the experience of the typical London or New York theatergoer but rather describes that of a participant in religious ritual. Thus, it follows that if drama is to re-create that sense of enchantment in a modern secular theater then it must emulate, in some ways, the Mass. Such, at any rate, is the opinion of one of the participants in Eliot's "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" when he says:

I say that the consummation of the drama, the perfect and ideal drama, is to be found in the ceremony of the Mass. I say, with

the support of the scholars whom B. mentions [Harrison and Cornford] (and others), that drama springs from religious liturgy, and that it cannot afford to depart far from religious liturgy.¹⁵

Eliot had always used ritualistic elements in his poetry and seems to have thought of ritual as an ideal toward which his poetry, most notably Ash-Wednesday, should aspire. That he should turn to the drama, and especially poetic drama, as a natural vehicle for ritual is not surprising; Yeats, of course, did the same thing. And like Yeats, Eliot sought to bring forth the ritual origins and essence of the genre from the typical dramatic experience of contemporary audiences.

Although all of Eliot's plays contain at least some suggestion of ritual, certainly the most clearly, and most successfully, ritualistic of the plays is Murder in the Cathedral. Here Eliot assumes the conventions of Greek tragedy most literally by using a chorus, long Aeschylean choral odes, an archetypal tragic hero and plot, and even something of a trial like the one at the end of the Oresteia. These he works in perfectly with the conventions of a contemporary ritual, the Mass: the chorus is played by the choir, the sermon (in lieu of a soliloguy) is delivered by the tragic hero, the congregation serves as jury and, more importantly, as an extension of the chorus, and ideally the play is performed in a cathedral before members of the church. Raymond Williams says Murder in the Cathedral "has a completeness which springs from the perfect matching of material and form," its form being the readily accepted conventions of Christian ritual. He calls the play "the best example in the years I have been considering [from Ibsen to Eliot] of the discovery of an adequate form of serious drama."16 Williams' praise is in many ways just, and, especially in the context of Nietzsche's description of Greek tragedy, Murder in the Cathedral comes as close to re-creating what the Greeks must have experienced at the theater as any modern play conceivably could. The religious nature of the play and its audience of believers constitutes its success as a ritual and yet, by the same token, limits the accessibility of the play to a general audience; and thus Eliot considered it "a dead end."17

After Murder in the Cathedral Eliot began to accommodate the conventions of Greek tragedy to modern tastes, although he never completely abandoned these conventions. All of his subsequent plays have contemporary settings, all have Greek models, and all contain vestiges of ritual. Even The Confidential Clerk has a mock trial presided over by Eggerson, and The Elder Statesman concludes with death and marriage, two major occasions for ritual. The titles of the first three

full-length plays tend to emphasize their ritual elements. Murder in the Cathedral has overtones both of a mystery thriller and of a religious sacrifice. The Family Reunion suggests a ritual gathering, in this case, to celebrate a birthday; moreover, Mary's and Agatha's ritualistic procession around the birthday cake at the end emphasizes the ritualistic nature of the birthday party. In The Cocktail Party the party itself is a ritual in some ways comparable to a Mass, and in case we miss the ritual connotations of the first party, Eliot makes them clear by the second party in the transition from Act II to Act III. The second act ends with a clearly ritualistic toast among the Guardians, even called a libation, while the third act opens with Lavinia's preparations for the cocktail party as she tells the Caterer's Man to bring in the trolley with the glasses (pp. 368–70).

Both The Cocktail Party and The Family Reunion illustrate a decadent form of ritual festival that René Girard calls a "holiday-gone-wrong": "The more trivial, vulgar, and banal holidays become, the more acutely one senses the approach of something uncanny and terrifying."18 In both plays a sacrifice is required in order to complete the performance of the ritual: Harry's departure with the Furies (or maybe Amy's death) in The Family Reunion, and Celia's crucifixion in The Cocktail Party. The "trivial, vulgar, and banal" conversation of the opening scene of The Cocktail Party is filled, as Carol Smith points out, with images of ritual and religion: "wedding cake, champagne, and tigers (suggesting Eliot's Christ-the-tiger passage in 'Gerontion')."19 And Alex's story of the monkeys in Kinjanka which precedes the final cocktail party seems nearly as trivial and absurd as the opening conversation; yet it too contains suggestions of ritual in some ways Christian and in some ways Dionysian. Not only, for instance, does the idea of eating Christians in Alex's story suggest the eucharist but, more significantly, it is after Edward and Lavinia learn of Celia's death, her crucifixion on the ant hill, that they are able to begin the cocktail party; the sacrifice of Celia turns aright the holiday-gone-wrong.

One can see how Eliot renders absurd the ritual themes of curse and sacrifice in the following interchange:

EDWARD:

And the agitators;

How do they agitate?

That the slaughter of monkeys has put a curse on them Which can only be removed by slaughtering the Christians. They have even been persuading some of the converts—Who, after all, prefer not to be slaughtered—

To relapse into heathendom. So, instead of eating monkeys They are eating Christians.

Julia: Who have eaten monkeys.

ALEX: The native is not, I fear, very logical.

Julia: I wondered where you were taking us, with your monkeys.

I thought I was going to dine out on those monkeys: But one can't dine out on eating Christians—

Even among pagans!

(p. 375)

In addition to the "libations," or eucharist, consumed at the cocktail party, the party suggests a Mass through this almost nonsensical conversation. Like a liturgy or like a nursery rhyme, it appears merely rote, almost nonsense, and yet the rhythm and images work hypnotically to evoke from the audience a mythic or spiritual realm of perception that lies somewhere below consciousness. These humorous, but subliminally evocative, conversations perform the same function that the choruses and lyrical duets do in The Family Reunion, except that they draw the audience in through humor rather than alienating it with unfamiliar conventions. The original director of the plays, E. Martin Browne, notes a difference between these two plays: "The Cocktail Party gives the audience no chance to insulate itself from the play's influence by saying to itself that it cannot recognize the characters or their situation as akin to its own."20 Thus, the ritual effect is intensified. By keeping Greek conventions and Christian symbolism on a subliminal level, Eliot accomplishes for a secular audience some of the ritual effect that Murder in the Cathedral has for a religious audience. Perhaps some poetic intensity is lost; certainly a broader audience is gained.

Nietzsche's contrast between the Apollonian and Dionysian spirits in *The Birth of Tragedy* is probably its central, most distinctive, and influential concept. If it were not for Eliot's extensive use of Apollonian and Dionysian themes in his plays, the relationship between Eliot and Nietzsche would certainly seem more tenuous. Essentially, Apollo is the god of dream, fantasy, illusion, of plastic arts, light, and the *principium individuationis*, that is, the illusion that each man is an individual and thus separate from the Dionysiac Oneness. In Nietzsche's words, "Apollo himself may be regarded as the marvelous divine image of the *principium individuationis*, whose looks and gestures radiate the full delight, wisdom, and beauty of illusion" (p. 22), an illusion which at once conceals the sublimity and protects us from the terror of the Dionysiac rapture. Only when the illusion of the individual is shattered can one apprehend Dionysiac rapture, a state of intoxication, which may be

induced either "through the influence of those narcotic potions of which all primitive races speak in their hymns, or through the powerful approach of spring, which penetrates with joy the whole frame of nature" (p. 22). Man forgets himself in this Dionysiac state as he enters a mystical oneness with nature and with all mankind. He realizes then that "Apollonian consciousness was but a thin veil hiding from him the whole Dionysiac realm" (p. 28). The Dionysiac is the essence of tragedy; the Apollonian is but the image whereby tragedy becomes possible as art.

Although the duality of the Apollonian and Dionysian is evident throughout Eliot's plays, one finds more of the eerie and often paradoxical Dionysian themes in the choral odes of his early plays, whereas Apollonian themes are more easily couched in the direct, familiar statements of his late plays. The following two passages from *Murder in the Cathedral* illustrate Dionysiac themes that run throughout the chorus's speeches:

But now a great fear is upon us, a fear not of one but of many.

A fear like birth and death, when we see birth and death alone In a void apart. We

Are afraid in a fear which we cannot know, which we cannot

face, which none understands,
And our hearts are torn from us, our brains are unskinned like

the layers of an onion, our selves are lost lost In a final fear which none understands.

(p. 181)

I have consented, Lord Archbishop, have consented. Am torn away, subdued, violated, United to the spiritual flesh of nature, Mastered by the animal powers of spirit, Dominated by the lust of self-demolition, By the final utter uttermost death of spirit, By the final ecstasy of waste and shame.

(p. 208)

Also, we know that the knights who perform the sacrificial murder are tipsy; the Second Knight says, "we had to work ourselves up to it" (p. 215). Apollonian and especially Dionysian images haunt *The Family Reunion* as well. In Amy's opening speech she laments the loss of Apollonian light:

O Sun, that was once so warm, O Light that was taken for granted

When I was young and strong, and sun and light unsought for And the night unfeared and the day expected And clocks could be trusted, tomorrow assured And time would not stop in the dark!

(p. 225)

When Harry comes home, Charles recommends to him a new wine merchant, and Ivy reminds him of his old, half-blind gardener who has "let the rock garden go to rack and ruin" (p. 233). Also, the duality between the real and the unreal, that remains central to the rest of Eliot's plays, first becomes a major theme in this play; Harry says: "The things I thought were real are shadows, and the real / Are what I thought were private shadows. O that awful privacy / Of the insane mind!" (p. 276). Dionysian reality is the Eumenides and the evil spirits that Mary and Harry as children conjured in their cave; what seemed real is only the Apollonian dream. Images of the Dionysiac spirit are particularly evident in the lyrical duets, such as the following:

HARRY: Spring is an issue of blood

A season of sacrifice And the wail of the new full tide Returning the ghosts of the dead Those whom the winter drowned Do not the ghosts of the drowned Return to land in the spring? Do the dead want to return?

MARY: Pain is the opposite of joy
But joy is a kind of pain
I believe the moment of birth
Is when we have knowledge of death
I believe the season of birth
Is the season of sacrifice
For the tree and the beast, and the fish
Thrashing itself upstream:
And what of the terrified spirit
Compelled to be reborn
To rise toward the violent sun
Wet wings into the rain cloud
Harefoot over the moon?

(pp. 251-52)

In *The Confidential Clerk* and *The Elder Statesman*, Eliot simplifies the Apollonian/Dionysian duality into a contrast between illusion and reality. Although a great deal is made of unreality in these plays, of projecting images and desires upon each other, the real becomes merely truth and, except perhaps for Colby's musical inclinations, is stripped of the Dionysiac passion and terror it has in the earlier plays.

The Cocktail Party, however, even without choral odes or lyrical duets, presents a clear but credible example of the Apollonian/Dionysian dilemma in the choices Reilly offers to Edward and Celia. When Edward approaches the Unidentified Guest, he begins to see beyond the veil of illusion. "There's a loss of personality," Reilly warns him; and Edward inquires, "And what is the use of all your analysis / If I am to remain always lost in the dark?" to which Reilly replies: "There is certainly no purpose in remaining in the dark / Except long enough to clear from the mind / The illusion of having ever been in the light" (pp. 307–09). Like the Dionysiac reveler, once Edward has glimpsed the darkness behind the veil, he can return (after the revelry) to the normal human condition, where, as Reilly tells Celia, "They may remember / The vision they have had, but they cease to regret it, / Maintain themselves by the common routine." "In a world of lunacy, / Violence, stupidity, greed," Reilly says further, "it is a good life" (pp. 363–64).

But it is not the life for Celia, the saint, the martyr, the tragic heroine, who feels that to return to such a life would be a lie. Reilly gives her another alternative:

There is another way, if you have the courage.
The first I could describe in familiar terms
Because you have seen it, as we all have seen it,
Illustrated, more or less, in lives of those about us.
The second is unknown, and so requires faith—
The kind of faith that issues from despair.
The destination cannot be described;
You will know very little until you get there;
You will journey blind. But the way leads towards possession
Of what you have sought for in the wrong place.

(pp. 364-65)

Celia's choice is a way of ecstasy, suffering, and finally death. "She paid the highest price / in suffering," says Reilly, "That is part of the design" (p. 384). It is not only a Christian martyrdom, as some critics claim, but is also the Dionysiac death of the tragic hero, which Reilly describes in distinctly non-Christian terms: "But such experience can only be hinted at / In myths and images. To speak about it / We talk of darkness, labyrinths, Minotaur terrors" (p. 384). The gods' elect is chosen to suffer so that the chorus and the audience may continue their average existence, so that, as part of the design, the cocktail party may go on. The choice that Reilly offers Celia has received a great deal of critical speculation. Carol Smith describes it as the "Affirmative Way of Christian marriage" versus the "Negative Way of Christian sainthood and martyrdom," which seems true but limited. Helen Gardner sees it

more broadly as a choice between love, kindness, and forgiveness among persons and "passion, which seeks to lose itself in its object, desiring ecstasy and a union that can only be perfectly attained in death, and which seeks to obliterate distinction of personalities in union."²² Whether one calls the choice Dionysian/Apollonian or not, it seems hardly justifiable to criticize the play, as G. Wilson Knight does, for not employing the powerful Dionysiac themes that other modern plays do.²³

Even though Celia chooses the Dionysiac life and Edward, after a vision of it, returns to the Apollonian life, it would be a mistake to associate completely the tragic hero with the Dionysian and the average man with the Apollonian spirits. For, in another sense, the cocktail party is a Dionysiac revelry where personalities are obliterated into a communal oneness-Edward tells Reilly: "I have ceased to believe in my own personality" (p. 348); whereas Celia, the tragic heroine, chooses the path of the Apollonian individual, who can only reenter the mystical oneness through death. This relationship between the hero and the community, or chorus, is evident in Eliot's other plays as well: between Thomas and the Chorus in Murder in the Cathedral, between Harry and his family in The Family Reunion, and to a much lesser extent between Colby and the other characters in The Confidential Clerk. According to Nietzsche, originally the only performers in tragedy were the chorus, and the audience and chorus had to imagine the god, Dionysus. Eventually the God was represented on stage by a masked figure, which evolved in tragedy as we know it into the tragic hero. Thus, the tragic hero was both a figure of Dionysus and an Apollonian image projected by the chorus (p. 58). Nietzsche speculates that in the tragedies before Euripides, Dionysus was the only tragic hero and that the apparently various heroes of the plays were only masks for the one god:

The one true Dionysos appears in a multiplicity of characters, in the mask of warrior hero, and enmeshed in the web of individual will. The god ascends the stage in the likeness of a striving and suffering individual. That he can appear at all with this clarity and precision is due to dream interpreter Apollo, who projects before the chorus its Dionysiac condition in this analogical figure. Yet in truth that hero is the suffering Dionysos of the mysteries. (p. 66)

Nietzsche goes on to explain that Dionysus suffers from his childhood dismemberment, that dismemberment, the true Dionysian suffering, is separation and thus individuation, and that "individuation should be regarded as the source of all suffering, and rejected" (p. 66). The tragic

hero, then, the individual, "in the course of his heroic striving towards universality, de-individuation . . . learns both to sin and to suffer" (p. 64). Celia fits Nietzsche's description of the hero even more exactly than the more obvious tragic heroes, Harry and Thomas, do in their respective plays. She describes to Reilly the two symptoms of her condition: first, "an awareness of solitude," and second, "a sense of sin" (pp. 359, 360). Like the Dionysus figure Nietzsche describes, Celia is forced by the "design" into individuality, or solitude, which gives her the "sense of sin" and forces her to suffer, as she does in Kinjanka, in order to "atone." Eliot, furthermore, suggests the possibility of dismemberment; Alex reports, "And then they found her body, / Or at least, they found the traces of it" (p. 381). But just as Celia's death is perhaps both a dismemberment and a crucifixion, so the burden of the tragic hero is both Christian and Greek. When Agatha tells Harry, "The burden's yours now, yours / The burden of all the family" (p. 276), critics are tempted to see the burden as a Christian one, and while it does have Christian implications, Harry's disappearance, Celia's death, and even Thomas Becket's death could be seen strictly as the tragic hero's burden that Nietzsche describes:

Like a mighty titan, the tragic hero shoulders the whole Dionysiac world and removes the burden from us. At the same time, tragic myth, through the figure of the hero, delivers us from our avid thirst for earthly satisfaction and reminds us of another existence and a higher delight. For this delight the hero readies himself, not through his victories but through his undoing. (p. 126)

In emphasizing the tragic elements of Eliot's plays, I have not meant to obscure the obvious comic nature of the plays after *The Family Reunion*. I do not dispute Eliot's labeling *The Cocktail Party* "A Comedy," but would dispute any assumption that the play is *simply* a comedy. Eliot seems to have struggled ever since *The Waste Land* with a problem Nietzsche finds dangerous: "It seems scarcely possible to graft an alien myth onto a native culture without damaging the tree beyond repair in the process" (p. 140). Though Eliot was not worried about damaging the tree, he became especially sensitive to the problem of grafting an alien myth onto a native culture after the production of *The Family Reunion*, in which the chorus and the Furies seemed to him incongruous with a modern setting. Eliot writes of the Furies: "They never succeed in being either Greek goddesses or modern spooks. But their failure is merely a symptom of the failure to adjust the ancient with the modern."²⁴ If the Furies and chorus seem too outrageous or

too fantastic for a modern drama, Eliot seems to have reasoned, then one must give them over to comedy willingly, as he does in The Cocktail Party. In her insightful essay on Eliot's comedies, Helen Gardner says that "tragedy must not strain our credulity. But comedy, if it is to be serious in its own way, must turn to fantasy for its plot."25 And so the Furies and lyrical duets of The Family Reunion become the comic Guardians and cocktail-party gibberish of The Cocktail Party. "Moreover," David Jones says, "there is plot enough to keep the audience happy while the burglar-poet goes silently to work."26 "Burglarpoet" seems an apt description for the author of The Cocktail Party, since he tells us that he was determined to conceal the mythic origins of the play (Euripides' Alcestis) so well that no one would recognize them until he pointed them out himself.27 In The Cocktail Party the writer of nonsense verse, Old Possum, and the "composer" of the Four Quartets find a perfect compatibility in a form truly tragicomic. For here is a perfectly harmonious counterpoint, a musical design that will enchant its audience without resistance into the world of myth and ritual, the world of the satyr chorus.

¹ T. S. Eliot, rev. of *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, by A. Wolf, *International Journal of Ethics*, 26 (1916), 426–27.

² T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays, New Edition (New York: Harcourt, 1964), p.

32.

³ F. N. Lees finds a few examples of Nietzsche's thought from *The Birth of Tragedy* in *The Waste Land* and Eliot's prose. Particularly notable is his suggestion that Eliot's term "objective correlative" may have come from *The Birth of Tragedy*; see F. N. Lees, "T. S. Eliot and Nietzsche," *Notes & Queries*, 209 (1964), 386–87. Also, Stephen Spender finds that Eliot's "Sweeney" poems and "What the Thunder Said" suggest aspects of *The Birth of Tragedy*; see Stephen Spender, *T. S. Eliot*, Modern Masters, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Viking, 1975), pp. 55, 116.

⁴ In a review of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* William Barrett criticizes Eliot for not adequately dealing with the problems that Nietzsche had raised on the same subject; see William Barrett, "Aristocracy and/or Christianity," rev. of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, by T. S. Eliot, *Kenyon*

Review, 11 (1949), 489-96.

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Francis Golffing (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 136–37. All further references to this work

appear parenthetically within the text.

⁶ T. S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1933), p. 146; quoted by Carol H. Smith, T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, From Sweeney Agonistes to The Elder Statesman (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), p. 24.

⁷ T. S. Eliot, On Poetry and Poets (New York: Farrar, 1957), p. 32.

- ⁸ T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909–1950* (New York: Harcourt, 1971), p. 271. All further references to this work appear parenthetically within the text.
 - ⁵ Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, pp. 93, 80-81.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 93. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹² E. Martin Browne, "T. S. Eliot in the Theatre: The Director's Memories," in T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work, ed. Allen Tate (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p. 128.

13 David E. Jones, The Plays of T. S. Eliot (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press,

1960), p. 15.

14 Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 34.

15 Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁶ Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1952), pp. 227, 231.

17 Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, p. 84.

18 René Girard, Violence and the Sacred, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore:

Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977), p. 125.

¹⁹ Smith, T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, p. 180. Smith pursues other ritual elements in *The Cocktail Party*, some of which seem rather far-fetched (pp. 179–81).

²⁰ E. Martin Browne, "From *The Rock* to *The Confidential Clerk*," in *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium for His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Neville Braybrooke (New York:

Farrar, 1958), p. 64.

²¹ Smith, T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, p. 178.

²² Helen Gardner, "The Comedies of T. S. Eliot," in T. S. Eliot: The Man

and His Work, ed. Allen Tate, pp. 170-71.

²³ G. Wilson Knight, "T. S. Eliot: Some Literary Impressions," in *T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*, ed. Allen Tate, pp. 256–57. Actually, Knight recognizes a few Dionysiac elements within the poetry but says these are not integral to the drama of the play; he fails to see the Dionysiac significance of Celia's death and the cocktail party itself.

²⁴ Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, p. 90.

²⁵ Gardner, "The Comedies of T. S. Eliot," p. 162.

²⁶ Jones, The Plays of T. S. Eliot, p. 130.

²⁷ Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, p. 91.

Style in W. C. Williams and Charles Ives

WALTER E. JOHNSTON

Dissonance
(if you are interested)
Leads to discovery
Paterson, IV

William Carlos Williams has, over the last twenty years or so, come to be seen as part of a broad aesthetic movement rather than as an idiosyncratic, isolated voice. He has been linked with Yeats, Eliot, Thomas, and Stevens in the development of a "poetry of reality" and with photography and painting in the teens and twenties; and, of course, he has been widely recognized as a major source for contemporary poets. But Williams' ties to music have been slighted. His poetry is musical as often as visual in its orientation; "counterpoint" is one of his own common descriptions of his verse and a term unavoidably used by his critics. Musical analogy in Williams clearly deserves some study, but even more interesting is his relationship to composers of his day. Mike Weaver has noticed Williams' interest in George Antheil, but there has been little analysis of the similar styles developed in music and literature early in the century. The similarities between Williams and Charles Ives are especially clear.

Although Ives and Williams were almost exact contemporaries—both lived to eighty years, Ives dying in 1954 and Williams in 1963—they were not significantly aware of each other. Williams may well have heard of Ives through his contact with George Antheil and other composers, but I know of no evidence that Ives's music held any importance for him. Ives had no interest in poetry, especially recent poetry; he thought it was "sissy" and (like Williams) sought an art that was muscular and direct, thinking poetry full of European ideals of prettiness and grace. So there is no question of direct influence,

rather a matter of parallel interpretations of the modern scene and of the relation of art to its past. It seems to me that the similarities between the two are all the more interesting because their styles developed independently, suggesting the *necessity* of an open, dissonant form.

There are a great many parallels between Ives and Williams, in their lives and their art. Both had successful careers outside of the arts, writing irregularly with great intensity. Both were aware of working across the current of their times, opposed to the traditions of their craft, committed to new expression. Both worked in relative isolation, belonged to no artistic group, and had little recognition until late in life. And both evolved styles that are strikingly similar: beginning with the local and concrete, they seek a bare essence of place or person; with an ear deaf to traditional harmony, they cultivate dissonance to defeat conventional response and create an effect of constant evolution, with a minimal sense of ending or final harmony.

Both Ives and Williams believed strongly that art must arise from specific local conditions, and for both men the idea of the local becomes complex. "Local" did not for either artist mean "realistic" or "mundane" or "detailed"; rather it was a romantic faith that the universal is discovered in awareness of the common. There is widespread agreement that "Williams' point is that every place reveals this [mythic] order . . . the local is the universal for Williams, not just another repetition of pattern." Ives's devotion to place is equally obvious; many of his best known compositions, "Three Places in New England," "Concord Sonata," "Central Park in the Dark," are meditations on the spirit of place. Both men made clear in their prose (In the American Grain, Essays Before a Sonata) that they sought some essence of the American place and character.

Ives often described his music as an imitation of the everyday and a simple evocation of the spirit of place:

Over the Pavements was started one morning, when George Lewis and I had the front bedroom in Poverty Flat, 65 Central Park West. In the early morning, the sounds of people going to and fro, all different steps, and sometimes all the same—the horses, fast trot, canter, sometimes slowing up into a walk (few if any autos in those days)—an occasional trolley throwing all rhythm out (footsteps, horse and man)—then back again. I was struck with how many different and changing kinds of beats, time, rhythms, etc. went on together—but quite naturally, or at least not unnaturally when you got used to it—and it struck me often how limited, static, and unnatural, almost weakheaded (at

least in the one-syllable mental state), the time and rhythm (so called) in music had been:—1-2, or 1-2-3-, and if a 5 or 7 is played, the old ladies (Walter Damrosch is one, I've seen him do it) divide it up nice into a 2 and 3 or 3 and 4, missing the whole point of a 5 or 7.4

This passage suggests much that links Ives with Williams: the attention to the common thing, the appeal to nature, the hostility to genteel tradition. The core of the similarity is faith in the expressiveness of the bare object; the only true music arises from local fact, immediately experienced. Ives discovers in these random sounds an effect more expressive than classical harmony because of his romantic faith in the common, and his Whitman-like vision of a vigorous, masculine, and democratic music. Ives thus attends to sound as Williams attends to the common thing: "the fundamental relational unit of Ives' musical language is not the tone as it was for Schoenberg, but the sound." For Williams, of course, the fact must be the source of form:

a green truck dragging a concrete mixer passes in the street— in the clatter and true sound of verse—⁶

But Ives does not write program music, any more than Williams describes that wheelbarrow or uses a rhythm that is truly as harsh as the concrete mixer; in both cases, the art that results from devotion to the concrete is a fragmented, "cubistic" abstraction, which ultimately questions the mimetic power of art. In *Over the Pavements* Ives does use repeated motifs that could represent footsteps or a trolley, but they are not combined systematically to make a picture, like, for example, the street sounds that open "Porgy and Bess." The elements are combined in a seemingly random fashion, increasingly chaotic, then breaking suddenly into quiet piano chords marked "quasiandante"; shortly after comes the leapfrogging piano cadenza. The "quasi andante" and cadenza have no obvious parallel in the street sounds and can only fit the "picture" as an underlying spirit, an idiosyncratically stylized essence of street.

The cadenza in *Over the Pavements* clearly illustrates this abstraction in Ives's "program" music. It covers the entire seven-octave range of the piano in eight notes, each an octave apart; this gigantic arpeggio flies up and down the keyboard, played "as fast as possible." On the score, it has an unusually symmetrical appearance, a series of

triangles; in performance, it has a highly stylized, wholly unprogrammatic effect. It is spirited, and seems in fact to release the pent energy of the preceding motives, but it is as far from imitation of a street sound as one can imagine. Early admirers of Ives's music recognized this quality in his music, as described by Henry Cowell in 1955:

For Ives the meaning of an event seems to lie in the behavior of the elements that create it . . . he reproduces the behavior of the sounds that are associated with it, their approach and departure, their pace and drive, interweaving and crossing . . . to make a system of musical behavior out of something first perceived on a quite different level.⁷

This same effect, of making a new "system" from the "behavior" of common sounds, occurs when Ives quotes well-known hymns, patriotic songs, or folk songs. On the surface, he is imitating common objects, often by direct quotation; but these fragments, out of context, do not carry their usual weight of sentiment, the automatic response. In fact they are often incongruous, and always dissonant, when treated as an abstract element in a montage. And since this occurs in music and not in a painting, the listener has little chance to analyze new relationships; the shock of a new perspective opens into yet another. This effect is most obvious in "The Fourth of July": the fragments of patriotic tunes conflict with each other, often in wildly dissonant array, releasing an exuberance that is no longer expressed by any of the shopworn melodies ("Columbia the Gem of the Ocean," "Battle Hymn of the Republic"). At the same time, both the cacophony and the quiet strong passages can be disquieting in their blatant or eerie dissonance. It is difficult to name the final or central mood of this piece; it is simultaneously intense and offhand, fluid in texture.

This musical technique is similar to the verbal montages of *Spring and All* and *Sour Grapes*. In "Overture to a Dance of Locomotives," a series of seemingly arbitrary details—"rubbing feet," a clock, porters' red hats—are made into an abstract montage that seeks to distill the spirit of this place by collapsing space and time (the imagined train trip is included). The abstract approach is particularly obvious in this poem because of its emphasis on geometrical shapes (circles, cylinders, a pyramid, parallel lines). Later, Williams' places will include an even less realistically detailed assortment of elements, as in "At the Faucet of June" section of *Spring and All*, which is discussed below.

Williams also quotes directly, of course, and like Ives he quotes "ordinary" rather than "literary" sources: signs, chance conversation, newspapers. (His poems in fact can themselves become an "ordinary

object": "This Is Just to Say" is the note that one sticks to the icebox door.) Williams uses the quote in much the same way as Ives: it is not commonly a "buried" allusion that fits into a developing theme, but a direct and obvious inclusion of the source into the poem with little evident intent to "develop" or "deepen." The news items about Sam Patch, or letters from other poets, can be tied to other threads in Paterson, but their primary impact is as things-in-themselves, opaque, resistant surfaces, not motifs that lead deep into the poem. The "SODA" sign in "The Attic Which is Desire" and the many signs in "Della Primavera Transportata Al Morale" are also simply included, usually with few connections to their new context. In "Della Primavera" the "Poison" sign, with skull and crossed bones, does not have even the visual coherence of the "SODA" sign that frames the windowpane: it is one of many random signs seen along the street that become part of the poet's violently fluctuating feelings in early spring. The immediate context is sexual, so that "Poison" is connected to the poem primarily by clashing with the sexual awakening of spring; but it in no sense becomes "integrated" into the poem.

Thus, both Ives's and Williams' commitment to the local fact implies a confrontation with conventional ideas of unity or harmony. Dissonance and the local are aspects of a single idea. When Williams "names" the wheelbarrow he establishes any number of basic conflicts. There is implicit conflict with poetic tradition: the wheelbarrow is not interesting, it has no sentimental attachments; it is not a "rich" subject for poetry. The language does not elevate it or even give a detailed description. It is given no human relevance. More importantly, there is implied tension with the notion that words can, simply and directly, capture the thing itself: "Paradoxically, in becoming a natural object the poem becomes separate from nature. A poem about a certain Rutherford sycamore for instance, may take on all the reality of a thing among things, but it will not be the sycamore tree."

The difference of word and object is the most important of the many dissonances that are at the core of Williams' poetics. (The most noticed of these is Williams' organization of his poems around sexual polarities, man-woman, virgin-whore, or his constant concern with destroying in order to create.) The commitment to words-that-name-things results in a poetic line and structure that rely heavily on dissonant effects. James Breslin has analyzed such effects in several poems; I will quote one at length because this passage could easily serve as a description of Ives's Over the Pavements:

In the first four stanzas, the lines "the sunlight in a," "is full of a song," "June that Rings," "the anemones in" could all appear in any romantic celebration of the summer; but these soft images appear along with their opposites here. The sunlight doesn't fall on the grass; it shines in a "plaque"—an artifact—on the "varnished floor." The day is not filled with melodious birdsong but with the noise of motor cars, whose tires are "inflated to fifty pounds pressure." June is a "faucet," the air a "triangle," Persephone's meadow not Mt. Etna but a "cow pasture." The music of the poem itself is by no means conventionally songful: typical is the use of harsh, explosive sounds (p, f) and long vowels in "full of a song inflated to fifty pounds pressure" to create the poem's feeling of tight fullness. In the "Prologue" to Kora in Hell, Williams had written that "the stream of things having composed itself into wiry strands that move in one fixed direction, the poet in desperation turns at right angles and cuts across current with startling results to his hang-dog mood" (Selected Essays, p. 15). "At the Faucet of June" works in precisely this way, the poem fluid, open, unpredictable in its reversals. These reversals are not, it is important to see, ironic. The circling between natural and mechanical images subverts any "one fixed direction" or mood, builds energy, achieves a totality—creates the poem's tensed force.9

This analysis combines the fact of dissonance in the poem with its ends: the reconciliation of opposites into a "totality" (not an idea about society), and a movement "fluid, open, unpredictable in its reversals." Commenting on Williams' refusal to give his poems a "fixed position," Breslin says that "the poems leave tensions unresolved rather than bring them to some resolution." These remarks describe exactly the effect of Ives's mature works, for example, the "fluid, open, unpredictable" movement of the "Concord Sonata," in which the unresolved dissonances defeat conventional expectations and create a constant sense of unfolding.

In the *Concord Sonata* there are two basic motifs that weave in and out in constantly varying form; and although each motif is simple in itself, the complex polyphony and changes of rhythm create a fluid dissonance; there is no effect of set form or obvious counterpoint of two themes. There is, just as in *Spring and All*, a definite sense of complex tensions that lead in no one direction, and that will not be resolved in traditional harmony.

The dissonance in Ives's music thus leads to another clear link with Williams: the use of dissonance to defeat "normal" expectation and open the music/poem to a new freedom of development. Ives does not resolve his dissonances in traditional ways, even at the end of move-

ments, creating an effect of constant opening or unfolding in the music. The "Emerson" movement of the *Concord Sonata* is typical: a series of atonal chords whose dissonance creates no clear "line" of development, whose circling themes will suddenly "break" into a new cadence or pause, tentative, uncertain of any direction. The music avoids creating any kind of expectation; only occasionally will a melodic line be pursued in any predictable way, and then intruding dissonances or a return of the "epic" theme will frustrate the seemingly developing melody. The overall effect is one of obscure tensions and sudden openings.

In the same way, the deepest effect of the dissonance of "At the Faucet of June" is to break the traditional logic of metaphor and open a new, usually indefinite space. The dissonance of "song" and "inflated to fifty pounds pressure" prepares for the even more concentrated dissonance in the next stanza ("Faucet of June," "triangle of the air"); both of these fracture the landscape to allow for the harshest contrast in the poem, the sudden intrusion of J. P. Morgan in the rape of Persephone. So the conflicting terms open the poem in several ways: they build a dissonant texture which allows increasing disparity of metaphor, and they defeat any expectation of resolution, leaving the reader seeking new kinds of unity.

Both artists also achieve the effect of constant opening through the use of pauses and discontinuities. The discontinuities in Ives's music are obvious; the most famous, I suppose, is the fugue in the Fourth Symphony, whose relatively simple diatonic harmony and conventional structure are entirely unexpected. His quotations also break the continuity, as do sudden shifts from extremely dense textures to thin ones. Robert P. Morgan discusses these matters extensively, and concludes that "the result of fragmentation is normally not an acceleration forward but a disruption . . . it produces a multidimensional framework in which relationships can be established simultaneously in both directions."11 "The relationships between phrases are thus "juxtapositional, reflexive, and reciprocal-not sequential, linear, and developmental." Similarly, Ives's use of pauses, especially in his own improvisational playing of the piano pieces (as recorded on Columbia Record's Charles Ives: the 100th Anniversary) has the effect of spontaneous, even tentative or reflective, silence, rather than formal elements in a design.

The effect of Williams' discontinuities is best described by James Breslin, who stresses Williams' "extraordinary range" of rhythm and sound and his use of "euphonious music" to build moods that are subsequently undermined. He then describes a series of effects, based

mostly on line breaks, that prevent a conventional and continuous reading of the poem: "Almost as soon as any direction is established, it is dissolved, and a new one begins. Often this broken, circling movement is the result of verbal or syntactic ambiguity . . . relations are fluid."12 Hence, we must not "seek a path" through the poem, but should give ourselves over to its unresolved multiplicity. Breslin's description clearly indicates what is currently called "spatial" form, a design in which relationship between elements dominates development in time. As we have seen, Ives's commitment to the primacy of the sound or the thing leads to a refusal of logical connections or "literary" techniques of unifying material, and hence to juxtaposition rather than linear development. Robert P. Morgan sees Ives's form as essentially spatial, with "a number of different yet simultaneous time-movements co-existing in a shared, multi-layered universe where each maintains its own individuality while also influencing and being influenced by all others."13 Morgan identifies many specifically spatial techniques in Ives that could easily be given literary parallels, but the central similarity to Williams seems obvious. The "multi-layered universe where each maintains its own individuality" perfectly describes Paterson or the montages of Spring and All.

The apparent contradiction between a fluid movement arising from dissonance and the stasis implied by spatial form is only superficial. The blocked-out design of much of Paterson, which has a spatial effect in the most obvious sense of separate elements rather arbitrarily dispersed on the page, also creates the constant back-and-forth flow of dissonant energy that was described earlier. In fact, the tentative or even static moments created by a spatial (as opposed to a "developmental" or "incremental") form instigate a search for clues or connections that intensifies the dissonant resonance. William Brooks, while making a similar point about "progress and stasis co-existing" in Ives, observes: "... Ives's works do not form a sequence in which certain crucial materials or problems are systematically clarified; rather, they seem to point in many directions at once, reusing previous solutions in ways quite inconsistent with the original materials' functions."14 This statement could be applied to Paterson with no qualifications whatsoever.

In both Ives and Williams, then, the commitment to local "fact" leads to a form of dissonant flux, with an implicit ideal of growth or discovery in the new space opened by the disruptive power of dissonance. Consequently, there is a denial of depth or development as traditionally conceived, as well as a direct hostility toward traditional

notions of unity. Thus both artists would seem to fit the now common view of the dehumanization of art in the early twentieth century, an art which destroys traditional Western value for the sake of energy or novelty, with no new vision or sense of direction and no commitment beyond self-expression.

But does the example of these two artists suggest a new kind of relationship with society, one like Walt Whitman's vision of a poet who destroys all traditional molds in the name of frank and simple relationships and tougher individuals? Williams certainly thought of his poetry as a direct and forceful apprehension of life, meant for his common countrymen, as opposed to the detached irony and effete intellectuality he saw in T. S. Eliot. His ideal was to forge a common, renewed language through constant engagement with local fact. Similarly, Ives plays with patriotic tunes or street sounds to convey a delight not bound by convention, to release the true spirit of such events in the abstraction of sound. And in both artists, dissonant form clearly implies an ideal of self-discovery and a simultaneous discovery of the essential qualities of American culture. Both would fit Daniel Melnick's analysis of the workings of dissonant form in Joyce: "the dissonance of Ulysses involves the reader in the processes of perception and judgment by which human life may endure in a disordered world. . . . His dissonant form obliges us actively to engage a fiction out of which we create our own human identity."15

And yet, this unique spirit of the ordinary in Ives and Williams, and the dissonant form which involves the reader in its discovery, remains idiosyncratic. Ives's "Fourth of July" has not become standard holiday fare; the shock of recognition that can emerge from a first hearing of this composition has remained a private experience. The "new speech" of Williams and Steiglitz and the precisionists, spare and often dissonant, has not become a public vocabulary. The failure of self-discovery as a means to create new kinds of community becomes a conscious theme in *Paterson* and, I think, in Ives's constant refusal of resolution. Dissonant form does demand active engagement, as Melnick says, but what is engaged is a social fragmentation left unresolved, or even intensified, by self-discovery. The dissonant style of Ives and Williams is essentially meditative, self-regarding; for all their concern for rediscovering the concrete "American" experience, the dissonance leads to self-discovery but not to any larger vision of community.

¹ J. Hillis Miller, *Poets of Reality* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965). ² Mike Weaver, *William Carlos Williams: The American Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971), p. 69.

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³ Joseph Riddel, *The Inverted Bell* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1974), p. 113.

⁴ Charles Ives, Memos, ed. John Kirkpatrick (New York: Norton, 1972), p.

62.

⁵ Howard Isham, "The Musical Thinking of Charles Ives, Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 31 (1973), 400.

⁶ The Complete Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, 1900-1938 (Nor-

folk, Conn.: New Directions, 1938), p. 184.

⁷ Henry Cowell, Charles Ives and His Music (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955), p. 102.

8 Rod Townley, The Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams (Ithaca, N.Y.,

Cornell Univ. Press, 1972), p. 141.

⁹ James Breslin, William Carlos Williams, An American Artist (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹ Robert P. Morgan, "Spatial Form in Ives," An Ives Celebration (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 145.

Breslin, William Carlos Williams, p. 72.
 Morgan, "Spatial Form in Ives," p. 141.

¹⁴ William Brooks, "Ives Today," An Ives Celebration (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 214.

¹⁵ Daniel C. Melnick, "Dissonant *Ulysses*—A Study of How To Read Joyce," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 26 (1980), 46, 52.

Introduction: Forster on E. M. Forster

MARY LAGO

"As for 'James and Forster', I hadn't seen the Cambridge Journal to which you refer," wrote E. M. Forster to Morton Dauwen Zabel in 1953, "and anyhow the matter causes (or would have caused me) no vexation. It is annoying for you to have been misquoted, or mis-cited, but the young are always doing that sort of thing, and I don't believe it harms us in the long run. 'Mr. Forster', wrote an Iraqi youth in a Ph.D. thesis which he blandly submitted for my approval, 'frequently refers to his aunts sympathetically, but never mentions his mother. This is very strange and ought to be looked into.' I must say that I now look no more into PhD theses about myself: the Iraqi youth has all unwittingly procured me this deliverance."

If his letters and journals are a fair sampling, Forster had always been able to receive discussions of his work with considerable equanimity. If they were presented courteously and thoughtfully, he responded in like manner even if the assessments were negative. If they were superficial or arrogant, he could be devastatingly scornful, but he did not often brood upon these to an unwholesome extent. In fact, he tended to be his own most stern critic. If the Iraqi youth had delivered him from concern about the opinions of the younger generations in thesis form, Forster never did obtain complete deliverance from his own opinions of his work. A brief survey of these opinions suggests both a consistent pattern and an answer to that much-worried question, "Why did Forster stop writing novels?"

A number of reviewers of the first volume of the Selected Letters expressed regret that there were not more letters commenting on his work in progress. About that, as about his personal life, Forster was a

very private person. Public or publicized moanings about difficulties or blocks in his writing he would have found distasteful and undignified. unworthy of anyone who professes, however humbly, to follow the light of literature. This did not mean that the subject was unmentionable, but what there is on it was kept within the small circle of friends whose advice and sympathy he considered reliable, those who knew the contexts of his subjects, had shared his experiences. There is also his most guarded place of comment, the "Locked Journal" now owned by King's College, Cambridge. It covers the years from 1909 to 1967, with gaps for his years in India and Egypt, and a three-year period during which the key to the diary was lost. This journal contains immediate comments on work in progress, and a great deal on work not in progress. There he seems very Victorian, a strayed disciple of Thomas Carlyle, conscience-stricken by the number of days unrepresented by a finished piece of work, or what was worse, by any work at all. One pictures him writing those days' entries by a single lamp late at night, perhaps with one of the cats for company but otherwise alone, his mother and the servants having retired hours before. When he worried, it was most often his fiction that he worried about. And even when a work was completed, even when it had been well received, he worried about whether it was good enough, whether he ought to begin another at once, whether he could begin another, whether it could possibly meet his own standards of excellence. It is quite impossible to picture him in the book spot of a present-day television talk-show, beaming at the cameras, working hard to charm a half-informed interviewer, projecting professional and commercial confidence.

Forster's cautious approval of whatever of his own work he judged sufficiently up to the mark is not unlike his tentative route of arrival at a literary career. In 1899 Lowes Dickinson had advised him, since his examination scores did not point to a future as a Cambridge don, "to think of journalistic work as one of the things I might do. I certainly should like it, but it is rather a pit to attempt without influence and I don't think I should be good enough." His Aunt Laura Forster, who assumed that she did have influence, vetoed the British Museum, "because someone says it is badly ventilated," The Italian sojourn with his mother in 1901–1902 was intended to make him into a lecturer on art, and he did eventually lecture on the Cambridge extension circuit. He made another, rather limp gesture in the direction of Cambridge: "My relatives would, I think, be appeased by an unpaid post in the University Library, and I should like it myself." He taught some classes at the Working Men's College in Crowndale Road but felt

less than adequate as a teacher. All this time he was writing short stories and journalistic pieces, but he satisfied neither himself nor many publishers. He wrote to E. J. Dent in 1904: "How crooked the world is: for my compositions are returned because they are too long 'as well as being hopelessly perverse and over strained in their attempts at epigram.' "5 He began the fragment now called "Nottingham Lace" but was "very discontented" with it.6

Gradually, however, he began to acquire confidence and some critical distance. In 1904 he thought "The Story of a Panic" "shockingly composed, & I don't know think they ought to have taken it. But I like it more than I ought to." Robert Trevelyan seems to have thought the story "The Eternal Moment" unduly flippant, and Forster wrote, "I wish you had told me of where are the facetiae: they are a most certain fault, & my taste doesn't guide me. Someone told me, many years ago, that I was amusing, and I have never quite recovered from the effects."

But he was amusing. The amusingness gradually found its literary levels in subtle gradations of the irony now often described simply as "Forsterian," because it so easily eludes critical analysis. Its lighter and more affectionate strain appears in A Room with a View, which was begun in 1901 and twice laid aside before eventual publication in 1908. Its blithe tone in the early stages echoes in a letter of 1904 from Forster to Trevelyan: "I wish you would quickly inhabit your new house: I want it for some people of mine. They are living there at present in the greatest discomfort not knowing which way the front door opens or what the view is like, and till I go there to tell them they will never get straight. If you would provide one of them with something to do and something to die of I should also be grateful." His "people" were the Honeychurches, and the house was "The Shiffolds," the Trevelyans' new home at Holmbury St. Mary in Sussex, in part the model for the Honeychurch house in the novel.

However, Where Angels Fear to Tread, in which the irony is heavier and darker, was published first, in October 1905. Again Trevelyan had reservations, again apparently having to do with what he saw as facetiousness. Forster sent a carefully worded justification of the novel, but Trevelyan's letter, he wrote, "was rather what I expected, and very much what I feel about my book myself, though on the whole I am less severe, and inclined, I think, to view my work too complacently. . . . [facetiousness] is an awful evil, and only you have warned me against it." One must wonder whether Trevelyan was on a wrong wave-length, mistaking Forster's very individual ironies for misplaced humor.

Elsewhere in this letter, however, in a passage that is becoming one of the most-quoted about him, Forster uses the word "work" with what seems an important modulation in meaning: .

You can gather however that I know I am not a real artist, and at the same time am fearfully serious over my work and willing to sweat at atmosphere if it helps me to what I want. What I want, I think, is the sentimental, but the sentimental reached by no easy beaten track—I cannot explain myself properly, for you must remember (I forget it myself) that though "clever" I have a small & cloudy brain, and cannot clear it by talking or reading philosophy. In fact my equipment is frightfully limited, but so good in parts that I want to do with it what I can. 10

"Work" now applies not only to this article or to that story, but to vocation, with novel-writing at the heart of it. Forster has arrived also at a theory of composition, which by 1907 will be part of a credo for literary creation. He told Dickinson that "all I write is, to me, sentimental," and that "a book which doesn't leave people either happier or better than it found them, which doesn't add some permanent treasure to its world, isn't worth doing. (A book about good and happy people may be still better but hasn't attracted me yet so much.)" 11

By June 1907, Forster had again taken up A Room with a View, which is about some fundamentally good and reasonably happy people. "I don't know," he wrote to Trevelyan during a survey of his "Lucy novel" manuscript. "It's bright and merry and I like the story. Yet I wouldn't and couldn't finish it in the same style, I'm rather depressed. The question is akin to morality." 12

In fact, here was the credo complete. Sentiment, style, and morality: there he had it, the standard to which he would adhere or aspire henceforth. He would formulate the message again and again over the years, summing it up in the last lines of Aspects of the Novel: the "development of the novel" is important because it implies "the development of humanity."13 It seems all the more fitting, therefore, that the letter linking style and morality should have been written just some two months after publication of The Longest Journey, in which Forster examines the development, and also the non-development, of characters who represent certain human types. That novel is built upon a foundation of moral imperatives, some of them very stern, dealing with the responsibilities attached to various kinds of loving. There is laughter in the novel, but very little of it is truly merry. Yet that novel, published on 8 April 1907 and thus just a month before the letter to Dickinson setting forth the principle that a book to be worth doing must "add some permanent treasure to its world," satisfied Forster as

no other of his novels ever did, despite what he judged to be its flaws. "The L. J. is a book to my own heart," he would write in the journal on 3 August 1910, some two months before publication of *Howards End.* "I should have thought it impossible for a writer to look back and find his work so warm and beautiful. It fills *me* with a longing for Wiltshire! I have given back to it what once I borrowed. To have written such a book is something. My next heroism will be to stop writing." 14

Of course he did not stop, although after Howards End there would not be another novel until 1924. A Room with a View was no sooner in print than Howards End began to "shape itself." In his journal's yearend summary for 1909 he recorded dissatisfaction with it; still, he thought, "though it is pumped it's not quite as bad as I thought, for the characters are conceived sincerely." He intended it to be "a contrast between money & death—the latter is truly an ally of the personal against the mechanical."16 In fact, his feelings about Howards End remained ambivalent. In 1958 he was to call it "my best novel and approaching a good novel. . . . Have only just discovered why I don't care for it: not a single character in it for whom I care . . . Perhaps the house in H. E., for which I did once care, took the place of people and now that I no longer care for it, their barrenness has become evident."17 In 1910, however, the novel made him famous, a circumstance that Furbank identifies as a major turning point, and a dangerous one, for Forster distrusted and feared the sudden attention, with more than a tinge of superstition. Public praise could cast a curse on the possibility of future works' being equally popular-or equally good, the two being by no means always synonymous.18

Howards End was published in October 1910, and, as if already laboring under that curse, Forster began to fret about the non-imminence of a next novel. His worries now had a different source. His earlier worries had originated within himself and had concerned principally literary craftsmanship. Now they pressed upon him increasingly from without: the public expects more, and the novelist has nothing in view. On 15 December 1910 he wrote in the journal: "For a solid hour & half have done nothing, and so it was this morning. Shall I force myself to begin a book & trust to inspiration dropping in some time?" In later years, when critics asked why he stopped writing novels, he would occasionally answer with some variation of his reply to Wilfred Stone in 1961: "I can only suggest that the fictional part of me dried up." In Nature there are always reasons for drought, and in Forster's case all the reasons and rationalizations add up to the same thing: his novelist's credo forbade his writing fiction that, in his judgement, did

not "add some permanent treasure to its world" and therefore be worth doing.

Still, it is easier to be ruled by such a principle in later years, when one has become an elder statesman of literature, than in the afterglow of a relatively youthful best-seller. He continued to worry about both quantity and quality in his work. The journal entry for 19 December 1910 begins: "Desire for a book," and then it outlines a plot for a family story, which would become the abandoned Arctic Summer. 21 On 10 January 1911 the journal notes a discussion with Syed Ross Masood about "my oriental novel, but he is not helpful."22 He had had "notions for essays—the use of history, poetry, criticism; perhaps a series" (journal, 13 March 1911). All this time he is writing reviews, essays, short stories, but public opinion, real and imagined, drags him in the direction of the novel. He refers to the "inevitable decline of my literary reputation" (journal, 14 May 1911). He is paralysed by "idleness, depressing conditions, need for a fresh view of all life before I begin writing each time," and completion of Arctic Summer seems "just possible . . . but see nothing beyond" (journal, 31 December 1911). Then, on 28 March 1912, the journal records another, a momentous turning-point: "Have settled to go this autumn to India."

India was refreshing in many ways, but it was years yet before it revitalized his writing as he wished it to do. Although he was writing Maurice, and although he was beginning the "Indian novel," he found England drab and depressing by contrast with India. The journal motif of dreariness picks up where it had left off in 1912: "Growing sense of my own futility doesn't sadden me, though I shall grow queer & unpopular if I go on as I am now" (26 June 1913). "So here I am with 3 unfinished novels on my hands. Even mother must notice I'm played out soon" (17 December 1913). "Shall never complete another novel. It's a relief and a pride to have brought off M[aurice] . . ." (31 December 1914).

Then World War I sent him off to Egypt for the duration. Upon his return, things were little better. Arnold Bennett, who had once warned him not to write too much, now asked why he did not write more (journal, 13 January 1920). The "Indian novel" was being stubborn. "While writing my novel," he recalled, writing in 1924 to G. H. Ludolf, "I wanted to scream aloud like a maniac, and it is not in such a mood that one's noblest work is penned." He ran away from the Indian novel by running away to India, this time to Dewas Senior, but there was no immediate breakthrough: "India not yet a success, dare

not look at my unfinished novel, can neither assimilate, remember, or arrange" (journal, 31 December 1921).

If we did not know that A Passage to India would make its triumphant appearance in 1924, it would be easy to become impatient with his discouragement. However, Leonard Woolf takes the novelist in hand, and the tone of journal and letters brightens. Forster burns his "indecent writings" because they were written for selfish reasons and are "a wrong channel for my pen" (journal, 8 April 1922). Soon he is reading "my Indian fragment with a view to continuing it. . . . Must try to recover my dormant sense of space" (journal, 12 April 1922). Mindful of popularity's curse, he suppresses temptations to wax enthusiastic about the novel. Still, the additions to the manuscript are "not bad yet I can't convince myself that the thing will ever be finished. If I could convince myself once, even for a second, it would be all right."24 Convinced or not, by January 1924 he had finished it "with great relief. I am so weary, not of working but of not working; of thinking the book bad and so not working, and of not working and so thinking it bad: that vicious circle. Now it is done and I think it good."25 His affection for The Longest Journey as his favorite never wavered, but he always knew that A Passage to India is both good and his best novel. Ten years later he wrote to Peter Burra: "I have been looking at my books lately, partly on account of your article. I think A Passage to India stands, but the fissures in the others are considerable." And in 1935 he told Burra: "I am amazed and exasperated at the way in which I insisted on doing things wrong there [in The Longest Journey]. It wasn't incompetence; it was a perversity the origins of which I can no longer trace. But for this, it would have been my best piece of work, I am sure. (Howards End I lose patience with—a Passage to India is certainly the best)."26 In 1957, commenting favorably on James R. McConkey's study, The Novels of E. M. Forster, he wrote, "I expect you are right in thinking that [A Passage to India] my best book. The one I like by far the best is The Longest Journey."27

The indexes to the Selected Letters describe Forster's hesitations and misgivings as his "writer's block." Perhaps this is not the most accurate term. It summons connotations of a road-block, a compulsory pause for a specific purpose, after which one continues along the same road. Forster simply dropped his plans for travel along that particular road, the writing of novels. After the pause he produced a great deal: two major works of non-fiction, a body of criticism both graceful and acute, and a thirty-years' series of notable broadcasts. But it is the cessation of

novel-writing that now seems to stir critics' curiosity most, and it was the novel-writing on which Forster looked back most nostalgically. He had plenty to say that would "add some permanent treasure to its world," but he seems to have freely decided that, on the evidence of current events, his fictional style was not adequate to carrying the message, which from the beginning had concerned fundamental sentiments: sincerity and love, kindness and decency. Perhaps he blamed his style too much, and perhaps he expected too much of the novels, too soon. In any case, he acted in accordance with his own code.²⁸

As time passed, Forster's regrets became less passionate, more reflective. "Only a little of my passion and irrationality was used up in Howards End," he wrote in 1944 (journal, 15 July). "I am reading Where Angels Fear to Tread," he wrote to Paul Cadmus in 1956. "It must have been written by a mad boy—for I was only a boy at the time. Now I am less perceptive and saner. Old Aunt Marianne [Marianne Thornton] comes out next month. Fancy if I could indicate the emotions beneath her surface as I indicated virility not violence beneath the smoothness of Gino." 29

After World War II his gloomy spells referred more and more to not-working, viewed as a moral lapse. The journal records a particularly bad time in 1948. He felt that he did "so little to counteract them [philistinism and spiritual drift]: only hot little rushes of anger" (26 May). "My present rhythm disintegrates . . . If I could settle on a big piece of work . . ." (19 June). "Unless I can manage to settle down to some work this year, I may go wrong, in my head. . . . I feel scared. If human beings have failed me, what is left?" (8 October). "I know that I am idle, uncreative, & superficial" (27 December). 30

Benjamin Britten and Eric Crozier, Britten's producer and librettist, rescued him from this Slough of Despond. The libretto for Britten's new opera, Billy Budd, was the "big piece of work" perfectly suited to Forster's needs—and to his talents, although he had never before written a libretto. It was music, always essential to the well-being of his soul; it was fiction; and it was fiction to which he had already been drawn in Aspects of the Novel. Melville's "Billy Budd" was the "song not without words," to be read "both for its own beauty and as an introduction to more difficult works. Evil is labelled and personified instead of slipping over the ocean and round the world, . . .", all uncannily apposite in that postwar world, when new evidences of unmitigated evil came to light every day. The work with Britten and with Crozier, who became Forster's collaborator on the libretto, rejuvenated him. He was wanted for work on a story; he worked with two human beings whom

he respected and admired; and they were doing something to counteract philistinism and spiritual drift. He did have a streak of idleness, and he was sometimes conscience-stricken at giving in to temptations to enjoy the distractions of fame. All the more important, then, was Britten's invitation to set to work. "I hope to live and write on it [artistic creation] in the future," he wrote to Britten after the première of *Billy Budd*, "but this opera is my Nunc Dimittis, in that it dismisses me peacefully, and convinces me I have achieved."³²

We know of course that he was not yet dismissed, for *The Hill of Devi* in 1953, and *Marianne Thornton* in 1956, prolonged his Indian Summer. But *Billy Budd* was the high plateau of his later years, and nothing thereafter quite measured up to that experience. Not even *The Longest Journey* always consoled him, but his faith in that book was too strong to fade for long. In 1964 he wrote: "How I wish that book hadn't faults! But they do not destroy it, and the gleam, the greatness, the grass remain. I don't want any other coffin." 33

He would have been pleased, I think, to know that so many younger-generation writers are drawn, not only to the novels, but also to the non-fiction, the letters, and the journals—which contain much, much more than the expressions of occasional discouragement. Would he now find some of our ideas about him and his work naive and even faintly amusing? Perhaps, for the pace of life and of world affairs makes it daily more difficult to imagine ourselves into his time and place. But that, I think, he would have understood. The great thing is that he encouraged us to be thoughtful; to judge our own work more rigorously; and, above all, to value the sound old sentiments that gather all solutions under the headings of love and kindness.

Note: E. M. Forster's letters and journal © 1985 The Provost and Scholars of King's College, Cambridge. By permission of King's College, Cambridge, and the Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the E. M. Forster Estate. Letters to Morton D. Zabel and Paul Cadmus are quoted with approval of the Newberry Library and Mr. Cadmus.

¹ Letter of 10 August 1953 (Newberry Library, Chicago). Morton Dauwen Zabel (1901–64), Professor of English at the University of Chicago, met Forster there in 1947. The offending article: "James and Forster: The Morality of Class," by Alwyn Berland, in *The Cambridge Journal*, 6 (1953), 259–80. Berland cites Zabel as having told him that Forster had had "a change of heart, and that he has, in fact, become an ardent admirer of James."

² Selected Letters of E. M. Forster, ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (London: Collins; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), I, 25.

3 Ibid., I, 45.

⁴ Letter to E. J. Dent, 30 October 1902 (KCC).

⁵ Letter to Dent, 25 August 1904 (KCC). Quoted by Elizabeth Heine in her Introduction to Arctic Summer and other fiction, ed. Heine, Abinger Edition Vol. 9 (London: Edward Arnold, 1980), p. xi.

⁶ Selected Letters, I, 51.

7 Ibid., I. 60.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., p. 61. 10 Ibid., p. 83.

11 Letter to G. L. Dickinson, 12 May 1907 (KCC).

12 Letter to R. T. Trevelyan, 11 June 1907 (Trinity College, Cambridge: photocopy, KCC). On the "Lucy manuscript" see Forster, The Lucy Novels: Early Sketches for A Room with a View, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, Abinger Edition Vol. 3a (London: Edward Arnold, 1977).

¹³ Forster, Aspects of the Novel, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Abinger Edition Vol.

12 (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 119.

14 Forster's "Locked Journal," in the Library of King's College, Cambridge,

may be consulted only with permission and by appointment.

15 See P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life, 2 vols. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977-78; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), I, 165.

16 Journal, 31 December 1909; 19 February 1910.

¹⁷ Forster, Commonblace Book, quoted by Furbank in E. M. Forster, I, 190.

¹⁸ On this analysis, see Furbank, I, 190-92.

19 Quoted in ibid., p. 192.

²⁰ Letter of 18 February 1966, in Selected Letters, II, 289-90.

²¹ Elizabeth Heine traces the genesis and demise of this project in her Introduction to Arctic Summer (see note 5 above), pp. xii-xxv.

²² Masood had encouraged Forster to write on India. See Furbank, E. M. Forster, I. 194.

²³ Letter to Ludolf, 27 January 1924, in Selected Letters, II, 46-48. ²⁴ Letter to Ludolf, 13 June 1922, quoted in *ibid.*, II, 42, note 5. ²⁵ Letter to Ludolf, 27 January 1924, *ibid.*, pp. 46–47.

²⁶ Letter to Burra, 13 February 1935, in *ibid.*, pp. 128, 130–31. Peter Burra (1909-37), literary and music critic, wrote the Introduction to the Everyman's Library edition of A Passage to India (London: J. M. Dent, 1942), an essay first published as "The Novels of E. M. Forster," in The Nineteenth Century and After, 116 (1934), 581-94. Forster always considered it a favorite essay on his work.

²⁷ Letter to McConkey, 21 September 1957, in Selected Letters, II, 266-67.

²⁸ On Forster's "old view of fiction" under strain after World War I, see John Beer, "An Orderly Uncertainty," The Times Literary Supplement, 24 May 1985, pp. 569-70.

²⁹ Letter to Cadmus, 24 April 1956 (owned by recipient).

30 On this bad year and its journal entries, see Furbank, E. M. Forster, II, 282 - 83.

³¹ Forster, Aspects of the Novel (see note 13 above), p. 98.

32 Letter to Britten, 9 December 1951, in Selected Letters, II, 246.

33 Journal, 26 June 1964; quoted by Elizabeth Heine, in her Introduction to The Longest Journey, ed. Heine. Abinger Edition Vol. 15 (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), p. lxii.

The Forster Collections at King's: A Survey

MICHAEL HALLS

I. Introduction

The papers that E. M. Forster bequeathed to his College are a part of the Modern Archives in the College Library. The Archives as a whole are too large to be described here, but it should be said that they complement each other in many ways. The Library is open most of the year (Mondays to Fridays only), and visitors wishing to work on the Archives are welcome to do so; it is, however, a condition of access that all such visitors make an appointment in advance with the Modern Archivist, from whom further information about the Archives and their contents can be sought by letter. There is an Annual Closure of six weeks, which falls in May and June.²

All papers in the Modern Archives are made available to visitors as far as is at all possible. Two general exceptions apply to the Forster Collection as to all others: letters may not be read during their writers' lifetime without their written permission, and material which is likely to cause serious offence to the living is kept reserved. The implications of this for Forster's papers are not extensive; few of his major correspondents are alive, and only a few late diaries (those written after 1949), two memoirs of events in his life, and the Commonplace Book are reserved under the second rule.³ Forster's Locked Journal, which covers the years 1909 to 1967, has to be reserved for the same reason, but a xerox of the entries to 1949 may be read at King's.

Unpublished manuscripts by Forster at King's and elsewhere are copyright under international law, and may not be published or photocopied, in whole or in part, without the prior permission of King's College. As a general rule the College does not permit the making of photocopies. Copyright applications should be addressed to The First Bursar (Copyright Permissions), King's College, Cambridge CB2 1ST.

Unless the context makes the contrary clear, the documents described below are part of the Forster Papers: that is, the material that came to the College under Forster's Will. Other materials already existed at King's in the papers of his friends or have been acquired subsequently; these and the Forster Papers together make up the Forster Collection as a whole.

The Collection is rich in unpublished, if not wholly unquarried, material, and I devote more space to what has not been drawn on for the various volumes of the Abinger Edition. I have attempted to give some idea of the critical affection that he felt for his mediums, paper, pens and ink; much of this affection springs from their physical—perhaps the right word is sensual—qualities, but he was also alive to the history that was implicit in them. On 21 January 1924 he wrote in his Locked Journal:

Finished A Passage to India and mark the fact with Mohammed's pencil.

Above all, when he was "recycling" something inherited from a previous owner he liked to breathe into it new, and usually contrasting, life, as he shows in his essay "Bishop Jebb's Book". This applies especially to notebooks, but Mary Lago has perfectly caught the sly delight that he took in recycling the most unlikely scraps of paper as letters. 5

To call Forster's writing "cacography" (as opposed to "calligraphy") is to mistake it wholly. Both cacography and calligraphy tend towards characterlessness, while Forster's hand is imbued with character; moreover, it is legible, with a quirkiness that supports its clarity right through to the last decade of his life, and it is rhythmical. The pen moves in familiar patterns, so that every stroke, curve and angle is a signature, while responding freely to the pressure of circumstances: nibs, paper, cramped space, or haste.

The Forster Collection is of substantial size, but nonetheless much of what one might hope to find there no longer exists. The surviving drafts of the novels dimly reflect uncounted sheets discarded to the wastepaper basket as Forster revised and rewrote. In 1922 he burned his erotic short stories, but preserved others unsuccessfully submitted for publication at the start of his career. In general, once a manuscript had been published it became more or less dispensible, so that though "The Story of a Siren" was written in 1904 (and rejected by at least one publisher in that year), when it did appear from the Hogarth Press in 1920 the manuscript, having served its purpose, disappeared: presumably into the fire or the wastepaper basket. Forster preserved unpub-

lished pieces in draft, rather than in a subsequent fair copy, to which we owe not only much valuable information about the movements of his imagination but also painful editorial dilemmas where he left alternative passages to stand, undeleted but mutually exclusive. The letters he received he usually destroyed once they had been dealt with; the major exceptions to this are those from Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, W. J. H. Sprott, D. H. and Frieda Lawrence, and T. E. Lawrence. There are virtually none from his mother, his grandmother, his Forster and Whichelo aunts, Florence Barger, Syed Ross Masood or John Hampson, and very few from Charles Mauron, with all of whom he conducted extensive correspondences of which his own side, to greater or lesser degrees, survives. Those from Mohammed el Adl lasted until 1960, when he copied them into his memoir of Mohammed, and then destroyed the originals.

As the years passed Forster's major correspondents died, and their Executors often returned to Forster his own letters, which he would carefully reread, destroying some (rather, it would seem, because they were dull than because they were indiscreet). It seems that this process would be repeated from time to time, for he made notes on some letters, in a hand of the 1950s and 1960s, of their principal contents, as if to warn him, on future winnowings, that this letter should not be lightly tossed away. The commonest of all such inscriptions on old letters is simply the word "Keep", marking down a letter as having a definite right to life, to be respected in other, future, moods.

A general and adequate reason for destroying papers and letters was that if he did not do so occasionally he would have to burrow through them. His broadcast talks, reviews, essays, memoirs, short stories, and the continual flow of letters from publishers, friends, admirers, and others must have threatened to submerge him beneath a paper tide. After his mother's death in 1945 he had to empty West Hackhurst of the accumulations of his aunt, his mother, and himself, and reduce his luggage to what he could house in his College room, his bedsit with his friends the Wilkinsons, and his London flat. The only solution was a bonfire, and the sale of many books to a Guildford bookseller. It is perhaps surprising that so much did survive.

II. The Novels

Autograph drafts of three novels came to King's in the Papers: *The Longest Journey, A Room with a View,* and *Howards End.* All these have been described and published in the Abinger Edition.⁷ No typescripts

of these, such as were probably used for printer's copy, have survived, nor are there any proofs.

Maurice exists only in typescripts, reflecting three stages in the development of the novel (approximately datable to 1913–14, 1932 and 1959). The only surviving copy, so far as is known, of the 1913–14 version was found in the papers of Forster's old friend L.H.G. Greenwood after his death in 1965, and returned to its author by Greenwood's Executors.

The manuscripts of A Passage to India went to the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin in 1960, having been given by Forster to be sold in aid of the London Library. Ten leaves, however, were found in Forster's Papers after his death, and these are now at King's. 8 The manuscript of Where Angels Fear to Tread is now in the British Library, though for thirty years before Forster's death it was in King's College Library. Forster had apparently given it to his old teacher and friend at King's, Nathaniel Wedd (1864-1940), for it was found in Wedd's papers after his death by Dr. George Rylands, while he was sorting them for Wedd's widow, Mrs. Wedd gave it to King's, together with other Wedd papers, but when the College acquired the Forster Papers the Governing Body decided to give the manuscript of Where Angels Fear to Tread to the British Museum Library, as it was then, so that Forster should be represented in the national manuscripts collection. There is a set of corrected proofs in the Papers at King's, lacking one signature.9

III. Other Books

No drafts of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1934) are known to survive, though sometimes during the Second War Forster wrote letters on the back of sheets of a chronology of Lowes Dickinson's life. On the other hand many of Forster's most important sources for the book have now come to King's. 10 The letters from India on which Forster drew in The Hill of Devi (1953) came to King's in the Papers. They have been collated with the published texts in Elizabeth Heine's critical edition of the book. 11 No drafts survive of the connecting prose. There is in the Papers an autograph draft of Marianne Thornton (1956); it is virtually complete, and is of interest. Some of the long quotations from the Thornton Papers are included as professionally typed transcripts, and Charley Forster's handwriting is so clear that his poem "The Tulip Tree" stands in his autograph. 12 Those Thornton papers which Forster had owned he gave to the Cambridge University Library during his

lifetime; a few similar documents were added to these by Forster's Executors, and a number of Forster family papers came to King's. These include letters, other manuscripts, and many watercolours and sketches.

IV. Short Stories

Of the short stories published while Forster was alive only "Mr. Andrews" has survived in manuscript. Those other stories which Forster left complete were first published in *The Life To Come and Other Stories* (1972), with the exception of "Ralph and Tony" and "Little Imber" which, with its multiple endings, was not then recognised as complete. Both of these and those fictions which Forster had left incomplete were published in *Arctic Summer and Other Writings* (1980).¹³

V. Plays and Poems

Occasionally Forster published pieces of verse and small dramas, such as "A Voter's Dilemma" and "Our Graves in Gallipoli". No manuscripts are known of any of these. There are unpublished verses, some on loose sheets, some written into his journals, that range from the Housmanesque, early, poems to a couple of pieces of comic obscenity reminiscent of "The Obelisk," written in his octogenarian hand.¹⁴

All Forster's unpublished plays appear to be at King's. These comprise The Deceased Wife's Husband (1907), St. Bridget of Sweden (1909), The Heart of Bosnia (1911), Pericles in Paradise (1917), and a brief satire on the BBC written in the Second War, Comfort Ye My People. There is also a strange, untitled, play in three acts, which I tentatively date to around 1909 and which bears some resemblance to St. Bridget of Sweden. It has been known since Forster's death as Allegorical Drama; a better title might be The Child of the Mountain and the Sea, though the fact that Forster left it untitled suggests that he himself was defeated by the challenge, as anyone might well be. Forster lifted the names of his hero and heroine from Blake, and wove around them a plot that owes something to H. G. Wells, something to W. H. Hudson, and all too much to Maeterlinck. The fact that the works of Maeterlinck became missiles in "The Purple Envelope" may tell its own story about Forster's difficulties with the play. It has two endings, neither of them cancelled. In spite of its uneasiness of style and technique—perhaps because of them—the play is of interest, and touches real poetry. 15

VI. Diaries and Journals

As an undergraduate at King's Forster used printed Collins Portable Diaries, partly as engagement diaries, but principally for journal entries. That for 1898 has almost an entry per day, until it peters out in October; that of 1899 has fifty-two scattered entries; that of 1900 only seventeen; and the 1901 volume is virtually blank. Another such journal kept in a printed diary is for 1925, the year after Forster inherited West Hackhurst from his aunt; he gave a new lease of life to one of her old diaries, one bought on a trip to Norway in 1870. Aunt Laura's travel journal is rather more interesting than her nephew's gardening notes of fifty-five years later, but we may be right to see in it a further significance. By adopting the volume for his own purposes Forster was possibly recording the change of ownership of the house that his father had designed for her, and trying, in a sense, to take possession of this skein of his own past. There are sporadic journal entries in printed diaries of a much later date: 1950, 1954, 1955, 1958 and 1964; these are all reserved, as noted above.

Apart from these Forster kept journals of his travels abroad, in which he noted, at the least, his itinerary. The earliest of these is of his trip to Normandy with his mother in 1895; the others cover (more or less completely) his visits to Switzerland and Italy (1901), the Mediterranean (1903) and Belfast (1912). Such journals also exist in the reserved class, for holidays taken in Italy, France, Portugal, Austria and the Mediterranean between 1952 and 1962. Four major volumes call for separate treatment. One of these accompanied him on both his first and his second visits to India (1912–13, 1921); these entries have been published. In 1929 Forster took with him to Africa a notebook in which Laura Forster, his aunt, had listed her leatherwork designs and orders from friends for 1890–91, and in which he wrote up his disheartening tour of the continent. His third visit to India (1945) was recorded in another of Laura Forster's notebooks. Finally, a fourth volume records his visits to the United States in 1947 and 1949.

In some sense, however, all these are peripheral, or preliminary, to two other volumes, the Notebook Journal (1903–1909) and the Locked Journal (1909–1967). The former is a quarto notebook containing both drafts of the "Lucy" novel, later to become *A Room with a View*, and journal entries. It seems to have been begun (on 8th December 1903) as a means of withdrawal from the suburban and family atmosphere. In the preceding months he had seen Cnidus and Olympia, watched

Tetrazzini sing, and, as he notes in the first Journal entry, heard the Hackhurst downs, "whisper in the sun after a storm". All these, and many more, recent impressions were offering him the seeds of creative writing, and it seems that the Notebook Journal was for him a region of privacy in which they could develop, and images of the outer life reflect to and fro between his imagination and the page before him. The visit to Cnidus became an essay; 18 at Olympia "The Road from Colonus" "hung ready for me," as he wrote later, "in a hollow tree"; 19 and Tetrazzini contributed a major scene to Where Angels Fear to Tread. 20 The sound of the Hackhurst downs runs through "The Curate's Friend". 21

The book was in fairly constant use for almost six years, and towards the end Forster's awareness of his sexual loneliness becomes increasingly visible. On 13th July 1909 he recorded the mysterious suicide of Malcolm Darling's friend Ernest Merz, a few hours after he and Darling had dined with him. He was puzzled and anxious, speculating that Merz's death may have been involved, somehow, with homosexuality.²² His next entry, 9th August 1909, records the death of his own friend C. C. Gaunt, who had caught malaria in India. Gaunt had been another of Elizabeth von Arnim's tutors at Nassenheide, and he and Forster had tugged her caravan together in Kent two years before. This, the last entry in the Notebook, ends half way down a page. A fortnight later (15th September 1909) he began a new Journal with a stout brass lock, moving from a notional privacy to a secure secrecy.

The Locked Journal lasted Forster for nearly sixty years; it was another piece of family history, having belonged to his father's cousin Inglis Synnot, Maimie Aylward's first husband, who had begun it with three pages of "Directions for taking care of Guns" in a rollicking Handley Cross style. Forster turned the book round so that he had a perfectly blank start, and wrote the word "PRIVATE", underlined, on a free endpaper, giving the effect of a title-page. On the verso of this he wrote a poem starting "Incurious at the window I watched the regiment pass, Monotonous in khaki Monotonous as grass'.23 Its model must have been Housman's "The street sounds to the soldiers' tread", but the differences are revealing: Forster stays behind his window, rather than "trooping out to see", and the soldier's glance offers him longed-for, but essentially vicarious, participation in a life from which he is in the long run excluded. As P. N. Furbank wrote of a similar poem of 1906, "It is not a very good poem, but it is significant for what it says about the novelist's ghostly and voyeuriste role in life."24 In some

sense his use of these two journals, and the recurrent image of himself as standing watching life through a window, are intimately linked.

In both journals Forster's entries appear on the rectos only, so that there is room on the facing versos for subsequent comments, additions and occasional notes of books read. One important feature was added in red ink (which Forster used very rarely, preferring black, blueblack, blue, and occasionally green): a skeletal biography of his friend Bob Buckingham, beginning with his birth in 1904. This probably dates from the early 1930s. Sometimes he filled in gaps in the record by pasting in, or inserting loose, journal entries made on odd sheets or in annual diaries, or by copying them in on blank spaces. It was probably in the 1950s that he wrote in the front the words, "For my Lit. exor." The subsequent qualifying addition is in square brackets: "[a glance through in Jan. 1963 disappoints. The personal entries are uncontrolled and niggling, and I should like them used sparingly in any personal account.]" The Locked Journal does not, of course, disappoint those who now give it more than "a glance through", but Forster rightly saw that among its functions, over the decades, there had been an almost therapeutic element, and the entries in which this dominates (mostly in the last twenty years of his life) wear less well than do many

The Locked Journal's entries fall into seven sections, divided by major intermissions of two or more years or by landmarks in Forster's life, and it will be useful, since the original volume is necessarily reserved, to enumerate these briefly.

- A. 15th September 1909 to 9th September 1912. [Intermission: first visit to India.]
- B. 31st May 1913 to 27th October 1915. [Intermission: Alexandria.]
- C. 24th April 1919 to 14th January 1929. Forster took the Locked Journal on his second visit to India, 1921–22. [Intermission.]
- D. 10th January 1931, beginning, "Feel inclined to recommence this book—the start [i.e. of the New Year] is so bizarre." Another entry follows, written a few days later. [Intermission: Forster lost the key of the volume.]
 - E. 7th October 1934 to 22nd January 1935. [Intermission.]
- F. 17th August 1938, beginning, "Stefan Zweig, met two days ago at Lady Colefax, said we ought all to keep diaries at this crisis", to 17th August 1945. [Intermission: third visit to India, and the departure from West Hackhurst.]
 - G. 31st December 1947 to 6th June 1967.

VII. Memoirs

Forster's earliest memoir of an aspect of his own life is called *Rooksnest*; he began it around 1894 in a notebook in which his father had made notes on the career of Alexander the Great. The memoir was continued in 1901, ending at the foot of a recto page with a sentence that he never finished; the next verso begins a self-contained conclusion written nearly half a century later, when in 1947 he added two pages of reminiscences of his childhood home and some extracts from old letters. His loss of West Hackhurst, still fresh in his mind, had probably pointed his thoughts sharply in this direction. He had also begun, in the early 1940s, a piece on the history of West Hackhurst itself, which expanded over the following ten years or so into a very substantial memoir.²⁵

Other memoirs seem to date from the early- to mid-1920s, and were written on the blank leaves of the 1903–09 Notebook Journal, probably for delivery to the Memoir Club. They are referred to as *Uncle Willie*, an account of his uncle, W. H. Forster of Acton Hall, Northumberland; *Nassenheide*, on his months spent in Pomerania as tutor to the children of Elizabeth von Arnim in 1905; and *My Books and I* (also known as *My Writing Career*). He also began in the Notebook Journal an account of his dealings with A. E. Housman; an abortive piece on which he drew for a later, full-length, and very fine memoir of circa 1937. The seem of the control of the control of the control of the control of the circa 1937. The control of the control of the control of the circa 1937. The circa 1937

Other memoirs written for the Memoir Club are known as *Bloomsbury* (a brilliant and witty account of Forster's first contacts with Roger Fry and the Bloomsbury world; this may be the contribution to the Club that Virginia Woolf admired, given on 17th November 1920),²⁸ and an abstract, well-crafted meditation beginning "How can I write a memoir when I have lost my memory?" A fragment survives of what might have been a projected memoir of his pursuit by the determined Mrs. Myslakowska, his Polish translator, but it is very brief. There is also an unpublished essay, *Swimming in the Sea*, partly autobiographical, which is in some sense a memoir, but was not, I think, intended for the Memoir Club. It may have been a talk for a literary society.

Four memoirs are very personal; one, *Kanaya*, may have been read to the Memoir Club, though it seems stylistically unsuitable.²⁹ Another, of no great interest, is reserved, and also describes a sexual affair. The third may be his masterpiece in memoir-writing, but it is difficult to believe that he could have brought himself to read it aloud, even to friends. It records his love-affair with Mohammed el Adl, and was

written in the 1920s, after Mohammed's death. The fourth is an account of his sexual awareness in childhood and youth, written in the Locked Journal.

Other unpublished autobiographical notes relate to his work for the Red Cross in Alexandria during the Great War, and, sketchily, to other events in his later life.

VIII. Essays and Talks; Notebooks, etc.

The fifty manuscripts and typescripts of Forster's BBC broadcasts are listed in the forthcoming revised edition of B. J. Kirkpatrick's bibliography, as are the (many) others in the BBC's own archives at Caversham Park, Reading.³⁰ Those at King's range from 1929 to 1961.

There are two undergraduate essays, and a group of talks dating (certainly or probably) from the Weybridge years, 1905–1924; some of these, at least, were written to be read to the Weybridge Literary Society. Others, of later date, were read to other audiences.

Of Forster's Apostles Papers only one is known, an account delivered to the Society in 1910 of a group of fifteenth-century Italian humanists. A few published essays and reviews also exist in draft among the Papers, as do Forster's working notebooks on the subjects of Italy, Egypt, Dante, Greece, and Roman History. Some of these are sketchy; the Egypt notebook, on the other hand, is almost an essay in itself. Another similar notebook contains a list of books to be read, with dates against some of the titles ranging from 1898 to 1909, and a few comments. During the Second War Forster began compiling a notebook of analytic and critical comments on Beethoven's piano sonatas, movement by movement; he did not get far, but the project (undertaken as a tribute to Charles Mauron) is of great interest.³¹

The Commonplace Book shows Forster as an anthologist, and quotations from the works of others, on loose sheets and in notebooks, make up several other, unpublished anthologies of poetry and prose—one on homosexual themes, another undertaken as a "reply" to Robert Bridges' anthology *The Spirit of Man* (1916). He also affectionately preserved autograph manuscripts, and typescripts, of writings by such friends as Cavafy, Lowes Dickinson, Siegfried Sassoon, Thomas Hardy and Donald Windham.

IX: Correspondence

A listing of the letters from Forster at King's is now in print,³² and it will suffice here to indicate some of the more important corre-

spondences. Of those which came in the Papers the most extensive are those to his mother Alice Clara Forster (1855–1945) and to Florence Barger (1879–1960). Other important groups from this source are those to Edward Carpenter, E. J. Dent, G. Lowes Dickinson, Laura Forster, T. E. Lawrence, G. H. Ludolf and "John Hampson" (John Hampson Simpson). After the death of Jack Sprott in 1971 the College acquired the very substantial group of his letters from Forster, and the Collections have also been enriched with many similar additions from other sources. The letters to C. J. Morris of the BBC should be mentioned (given by the recipient), and so should those to his aunt Rosie Alford and his cousin by marriage Florrie Whichelo (both acquired so recently that they are not listed in Mary Lago's Calendar).

X. Other Materials

Forster's books were inherited by Jack Sprott, and the bulk of them sold through Heffer's of Cambridge in 1971. Before they were thus dispersed, however, they were listed by the then Librarian of King's. Dr. A. N. L. Munby, and several hundred volumes were purchased by the College and added to the Forster Collection. These include all his copies of his own published writings, his Cavafy collection, many volumes which relate intimately to his writings and career (such as his Baedekers), and some books of especial significance to him, such as the copy of Virgil that he was given by H. O. Meredith when he was twenty-one, and in which Forster recorded the news, sixty-four years later, of Meredith's death. In his lifetime he had given many books to the College Library, some of which have now been transferred from the open shelves to the Forster Collection as being of special interest. Outstanding among these gifts was his copy, one of the finest in the world, of Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience: the copy that Blake had printed and illuminated for his own use, not for sale. Forster had been given it by his aunt Laura Forster, who had had it from her father the Reverend Charles Forster, who had had it from his patron Bishop Jebb, who had acquired it directly from Catherine Blake after Blake's death. Forster gave it to the College to mark his eightieth birthday in 1959.

Other books relevant to the Collection have been acquired from many sources, notably from Mrs. May Buckingham, who presented to the Collection some fine association copies which Forster had given to her and Bob Buckingham. Foremost among these is the copy of Housman's Last Poems (1922) in which Forster kept the only pleasant letter

that he ever received from Housman. Scholars who have worked on the Collections have generously given offprints or copies of their books on Forster, and the College's ownership of the copyright has also contributed to the building up of a very useful reference collection of editions and studies.³³

It is fitting to conclude this necessarily cursory survey with a warm acknowledgement not only of Forster's own generosity in preserving so much, and bequeathing it for the use of those who wish to deepen their understanding of his life and work, but also of the generosity of so many who have contributed to the building up of the Forster Collection at King's: a fitting and useful memorial to a man who, as he himself said of Gibbon, "loved books but was not dominated by them. He knew how to use them." 34

Note: E. M. Forster's Notebooks and Journal © 1985 The Provost and Scholars of King's College, Cambridge. By permission of King's College, Cambridge, and the Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the E. M. Forster Estate.

¹ Other collections include the papers of Roger Fry, Rupert Brooke, Rosamond Lehmann, and Forster's friend W. J. H. Sprott, and important sections of the papers of T. S. Eliot, Maynard Keynes and Clive and Vanessa Bell. The surviving papers of Forster's King's friends Nathaniel Wedd and G. Lowes Dickinson are also at King's.

² Correspondence should be addressed to The Modern Archivist, King's

College, Cambridge CB2 1ST.

³ The Commonplace Book has been published in facsimile, in which five small obliterations have been made of possibly offensive passages: E. M. Forster, *Commonplace Book*, with introduction by P. N. Furbank (London: Scolar Press, 1978). Copies of this facsimile are in the Forster Collection.

4 "Bishop Jebb's Book", in Two Cheers for Democracy (1951), pp. 193-96;

Abinger Edition Volume 11 (1972), pp. 181-184.

⁵ Mary Lago, compiler, Calendar of the Letters of E. M. Forster (London: Mansell, 1985), p. ix, column a.

⁶ See E. M. Forster, Arctic Summer and Other Fiction, ed. Elizabeth Heine and

Oliver Stallybrass (Abinger Edition Volume 9, 1980), pp. x-xi.

⁷ The Longest Journey, ed. Elizabeth Heine (Abinger Edition Volume 2, 1984), pp. 1-lvii and 307-310; The Lucy Novels: Early Sketches for "A Room with a View", ed. Oliver Stallybrass (Abinger Edition Volume 3a, 1977), pp. v-xii; The Manuscripts of "Howards End," ed. Oliver Stallybrass (Abinger Edition Volume 4a, 1973), pp. vii-ix.

⁸ These ten leaves are Stallybrass's MS D (*The Manuscripts of "A Passage to India*", Abinger Edition Volume 6a, 1978), p. x, where they are printed on pp. 8–11, 101–103, 332–333, 397, 455–456, 465, 511–512. Note that MS D9^v is

related to chapter 29, not chapter 26 as Stallybrass writes on p. x.)

⁵ See E. M. Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread, ed. Oliver Stallybrass

(Abinger Edition Volume 1, 1975), pp. 153 et sqq. Stallybrass states (p. 153) that Wedd bequeathed this MS and other papers to King's; this is not the case.

¹⁰ Principally Lowes Dickinson's own Recollections, now published in The Autobiography of G. Lowes Dickinson and Other Unpublished Writings, ed. Sir Dennis Proctor (London: Duckworth, 1973), and other related manuscripts; and the Journals of C. R. Ashbee.

¹¹ E. M. Forster, *The Hill of Devi and other Indian Writings*, ed. Elizabeth Heine, (Abinger Edition Volume 14, 1983).

¹² See Marianne Thornton (1956), p. 197.

- ¹³ E. M. Forster, *The Life to Come and other stories*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (Abinger Edition Volume 8, 1972), and see also Oliver Stallybrass and George H. Thomson, "E. M. Forster's *The Life to Come*: Description of the Manuscripts and Typescripts at King's College, Cambridge" in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LXXII.4, 1978, pp. 477–503; for *Arctic Summer*, see note 6 above.
- ¹⁴ These last poems, "Vulcan and Adonis" and "A Soldier of the Devil's Own", are written in the same notebook that contains the drafts of "Little Imber".
- ¹⁵ All the full-length plays mentioned here are described in P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life, Volume I (Secker & Warburg, 1977), pp. 158, 178, 199–202, except for *Pericles in Paradise*, written in Egypt about the painter Pericles Anastassiades, Sir Bartle Frere, Cavafy, and other friends. This survives only in a copy written in an unidentified hand.

16 The Hill of Devi and other Indian writings, ed. Elizabeth Heine (1983), pp.

117-228, 300-301.

17 Ibid., pp. 241-281.

18 "Cnidus", Independent Review, March 1904; Abinger Harvest (1936), pp.

170-174. See also Furbank, op. cit., pp. 102-3.

¹⁹ "The Road from Colonus", Independent Review, June 1904; The Celestial Omnibus and other Stories (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1911), pp. 143–164. Cf. also the Collected Short Stories (1947), p. vii.

²⁰ Where Angels Fear to Tread, chapter six; ed. cit., pp. 92-97.

²¹ Notebook Journal 1903–1909, entry of 8th December 1903. This entry also includes the germs of the stories "The Purple Envelope" and "The Tomb of Pletone".

²² Furbank, E. M. Forster, I, 179.

²³ The remaining three stanzas are quoted *ibid.*, p. 183.

- ²⁴ A. E. Housman, A Shropshire Lad (1896), XXII; Furbank, E. M. Forster, I, 137.
- ²⁵ This memoir, West Hackhurst: A Surrey Ramble, remains reserved. Rooksnest was published in Howards End, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (Abinger Edition Volume 4, 1973), pp. 341–351.

²⁶ Uncle Willie has been published in The Longest Journey, ed. Heine, pp.

294-300, and My Books and I, in ibid., pp. 300-306.

²⁷ The manuscript of the later Housman memoir has been given to King's

by C. J. Morris, to whom Forster had given it.

²⁸ Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth Press, 1977–84), II, 77 (entry of 5th December 1920).

²⁹ Published in *The Hill of Devi*, ed. Heine, pp. 310-324.

³⁰ B. J. Kirkpatrick, A Bibliography of E. M. Forster (1965; second edition 1968). Third edition due to be published in 1985.

³¹ See P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life, (London: Secker and Warburg,

1978), II, 252-253.

32 See note 5, above.

³³ It should also be noted that Forster's photograph collection contains about one thousand items.

³⁴ "In My Library", in Two Cheers for Democracy (1951) p. 312; Abinger ed., p. 298.

"One Fraction of a Summer Field": Forster and A. E. Housman

PHILIP GARDNER

In Chapter 33 of *Howards End*, Margaret Schlegel pays her brief second visit to the house she will eventually inherit. As she walks the mile or so from Hilton station, her creator interrupts her pleasure in the landscape of Hertfordshire which had so captured him as a boy to express his reservations about the literary embodiment of the English countryside. England, he complains, lacks "a great mythology": the "native imagination" has been unable to "vivify one fraction of a summer field, or give names to half a dozen stars." "The witches and the fairies" are all it has managed, and England, Forster concludes,

still waits for the supreme moment of her literature—for the great poet who shall voice her, or better still, for the thousand little poets whose voices shall pass into our common talk.¹

It is a touching and eloquent passage; it is also arrogant and difficult to account for. True, in 1927 Forster described Edward Thomas, with his many evocations in prose and poetry of pre-war English rural life and landscape, as the "Bore-Laureate". But what of Shakespeare, Drayton, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Arnold? Elsewhere in Howards End Forster makes moving contributions of his own; but some of the imagery in Chapter 19, describing the panorama of south England from Ballard Down, is drawn from Shakespeare. And as Forster admitted to William Plomer in later years, the chapters set at "Oniton" in Shropshire (25-29) breathe the spirit of A. E. Housman.³ When, in Chapter 26, Forster states that Oniton "thrilled [Margaret] with poetry", one murmurs almost automatically "Never ask me whose." A Shropshire Lad had passed "into our common talk" by 1910, and into Forster's imagination especially deeply. His implied exclusions in Chapter 33 of Howards End are thus unnecessarily sweeping. Is it too much to suspect that they constitute not only a young writer's bid for

general notice, but a bid for the notice of one particular potential reader whom in fact he admired?

Forster first encountered Housman's work in the winter of 1898, when A Shropshire Lad, first published at Housman's expense by Kegan Paul in 1896, was reprinted by Grant Richards and began to sell more widely. The encounter with the book gradually fructified into what might also be called an unrequited love for its author, which ebbed and flowed with the years and did not abate until after Housman's death in 1936, by which time Forster had had cause to realise that "the warmth of the writer's heart," which had seemed "unalloyed" to his youthful reader, was by no means to be released by personal contact. The "relationship" was sufficiently important, and bothersome, to Forster for him to recapitulate it twice: the first time in a short summary made probably in 1928, the second in an eighteen-page memoir headed "Private, A. E. Housman," which paradoxically Forster read to a group of friends some time between the end of 1936 and the beginning of World War II. Both pieces combine retrospection with a degree of self-protection and wounded amour-propre, and cannot therefore be taken as telling the whole story, though without them it could be only sketchily reconstructed.5

Recalling, in 1928, his first acquaintance with Housman's work, Forster attributed it, "probably," to his close friend Hugh Meredith, whom he met in his second year at King's. Such a highly-charged youthful friendship must have intensified the emotional vibrations of the poems. But the copy of *A Shropshire Lad* he owned was the third Grant Richards edition, published in 1900 and given him in June of that year by W. M. Mollison, another undergraduate friend, perhaps as a graduation memento. In his memoir of the late 1930s Forster claimed not to have valued the copy itself, since Mollison, a medical student, "seemed to me too worldly and canny to be connected with high poetry." The value to him of its contents, however, may be gauged from his remark immediately following: "A copy with perfect associations would have overwhelmed me, perhaps it is as well that I never had one."6

Even so, he admitted in his 1930s memoir to reading his copy of A Shropshire Lad "for seven years in an awed muddled way"; and in the spring of 1907 he prolonged a walking tour in Wales, where Hugh Meredith and his wife were among his companions, into a solitary pilgrimage through many of the places made resonant by Housman's poems, not knowing at this time either that their author was a Professor of Latin or that he came in fact from Worcestershire. On 9 April he

was in Shrewsbury, and recorded in his diary that there was "poetry—or luck—in every inch of it." From there he went to Wellington, walked in rainy, viewless weather over the Wrekin to Much Wenlock (the "Wenlock town" of ASL XXXIX), and took the train which in those days ran past Housman's "Hughley steeple" (really a tower), along Wenlock Edge, and thence by Craven Arms to Ludlow.8

Here, "seated in the great bow window" of the Angel Hotel, Forster experienced "a rush of gratitude and love towards the poet who had given me—I didn't exactly know what," and determined to express this in a letter to Housman. This he sent, on the hotel's writing paper, on April 12th; years later he recalled one phrase in it: "My obscure admiration has grown with the years." Though he gave no home address, and so could politely seem not to expect a reply, he hoped one might come to the hotel and be forwarded; but this did not happen. Thus Forster, at twenty-eight, was initially less lucky than Housman's American admirer Witter Bynner, who in 1903, at the age of twenty-two, had written an "ardent" fan letter and received a notably warm-hearted reply. 10

The admiration which, in writing to Housman, Forster had described as "obscure" did not lack perspicuity. Just before he visited Shropshire, Forster had first met Syed Ross Masood, the Indian who replaced Meredith in his affections; perhaps this circumstance sharpened his perception of what lay behind the lyrical melancholy of Housman's landscapes. At any rate, when soon afterwards an acquaintance called Phillimore¹¹ agreed with his conjecture that A Shropshire Lad "concealed a personal experience," conjecture crystallised into the certainty that "the poet must have fallen in love with a man." 12 "This writer is my natural food," Forster was still able to say in 1928, and to the "inexhaustible . . . sweet intoxicants" which "the dexterity of his art" served out was added what Forster called in the late 1930s "an extra of emotion" which he did not expect his listeners to see. 13 This resulted from fellow-feeling, from the pleasure given him by the recognition that his youthful absorption in Housman's poems had accompanied his own emotional "development from subconscious to conscious." (A more specific link between Forster and Housman-that Masood and Moses Jackson, the great love of Housman's life, happened to be similar physical types—is a grace note of which Forster could not have been aware.)

The first public form taken by Forster's admiration was the inclusion in A Room with a View, published in 1908, of the opening of A Shropshire Lad XXXII:

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE

From far, from eve and morning, and you twelve-winded sky,
The stuff of life to knit me
Blew hither: here am I.

The stanza, spoken by Mr. Emerson in Florence to illustrate the melancholy of his son George, ¹⁴ is somewhat gratuitous in its context, since Mr. Emerson immediately adds a kind of disclaimer: "We know that we come from the winds, and that we shall return to them. . . . But why should this make us unhappy? . . . I don't believe in this world sorrow." Forster included it, he recalled in 1928, "to Percy Lubbock's regret" his motive was perhaps to attract Housman's attention as his letter had not. ¹⁶ A less insistent indication of his response to Housman may be his use, twice in the same novel, of the comparatively rare word "cumber" (which occurs in ASL IV, "Reveille"), on both occasions in connection with Lucy Honeychurch's developing awareness of George Emerson. ¹⁷

More poetically, Forster's response was conveyed in the "Oniton" chapters of *Howards End*. Geographically, "Oniton" is based on Clun in Shropshire, though its clock chiming "See, the conquering hero comes" alludes to Housman's Ludlow (ASL III); but its mysterious and romantic atmosphere embodies not only Forster's feeling for Housman's Clun (ASL L) but his saturation in Housman's volume as a whole. "I loved the place extraordinarily," Margaret Schlegel says in Chapter 31, when she learns that Oniton Grange, where she hoped to live, has been let. One registers a further sign of Housman's influence in Forster's choosing to make Leonard Bast's maternal grandfather a Shropshire agricultural labourer; he himself, described in Chapter 14 as "the third generation, grandson to the shepherd or ploughboy whom civilization has sucked into the town," seems an heir to Housman's deracinated Shropshire Lad, pining in London for a "land of lost content."

Forster's first meeting with Housman occurred some time between 1911, when Housman obtained the Latin chair at Cambridge, and the start of World War I. The occasion, a "dim dinner" there at the house of Harry Norton (1887–1936), a minor member of the Bloomsbury circle, seems not to have affected Forster profoundly. Neither did it put him off. Roger Fry talked much of French literature, and Forster worried lest the silent professor might be finding fault. But though Housman "contributed nothing," he "was too intelligent and too much alert to have the effect of a wet blanket." ¹⁸

During the next decade Forster's experiences in Alexandria and on his second visit to India gave him other preoccupations; but the publication in October, 1922, of Housman's Last Poems brought his admiration to the surface again. This volume seemed to him even better than its predecessor, "more dramatic, more frank, more literary, more everything." I suspect that Forster's response to its melancholy was tinged by sadness over Mohammed el Adl, his lover in Alexandria who had died of consumption early in May of that year, for two of the poems in his copy bear dates in Forster's hand: XXIX ("Wake not for the world-heard thunder") is annotated "March 30, 1922," and "Hell Gate," Housman's longest and strangest poem (a sort of male version of the Orpheus and Eurydice legend) is annotated "April 10, 1922." Both dates are likely to have been entered much later, since they are the dates of composition (or completion) supplied by Laurence Housman in his Memoir of 1937, A.E.H. ¹⁹ But it is surely significant that, of the sizeable list of datings in the Memoir, Forster chose to note just these two: it was in March and April 1922 that Mohammed wrote Forster his last two, gloomy, letters.

It is thus doubly easy to understand why Forster, "delighted . . . with my second eye," should have been unable to resist the impulse to write to Housman a second time. This he did on 22 February 1923, expressing gratitude for the poems, wishing for Housman's happiness, and, again, withholding his address. Forster wrote warmly, but in terms kept carefully vague, since, as he stated in the 1930s, "I knew now what the poems were about, and what the poet thought people thought they were about." This time, despite the withheld address, and within three days, Housman replied, briefly but with distinct warmth; against Forster's expectation, he still remembered their pre-war meeting. Again one feels the trembling between them of shared but unspoken experience: only five weeks before, Moses Jackson, to cheer whom in his last days Housman had rushed Last Poems into print, had died of cancer in Vancouver.

Forster valued Housman's letter sufficiently to paste it into his copy of *Last Poems*, and when he was invited, in Spring 1926, to give the Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which Housman was a Fellow, he had hopes that he might get to know him better. Housman had himself declined the same invitation the year before, and Forster was confidentially allowed to see Housman's letter, which in his 1930s memoir he described as "a proud dignified refusal in the interests of exact scholarship." He went to the trouble of copying this out, after he had given his lectures early in 1927, in his Commonplace Book, and in his 1930s memoir did not mind referring to himself as "second choice" to Housman. He also stated there that Housman had received him "courteously," attended two of his lectures, and indirectly con-

veyed his approval of them. What is more significant in a man as reticent as Housman, he had joked to Forster when they dined together in Trinity that the purpose of his regular visits to Paris was "to be in unrespectable company." The "twinkle" that accompanied this statement was seen by Forster as allowing a more serious interpretation. But when Forster tried to visit Housman in his rooms, to which few were ever invited, its outer door was shut, so that he could only leave his card, and to the transcription of Housman's letter in his Commonplace Book he appended a comment whose slight surliness conveys that, at the time, disappointment had outweighed pleasure: "Housman came to two [of my lectures] and I called on him on the strength of this, but he took no notice."²⁴

Nevertheless, the publication a year later of The Eternal Moment gave Forster the opportunity to re-establish contact. He instructed his publishers to send the poet a copy, and himself wrote to Housman, on 28 March 1928, to explain why: his story of 1911 "The Point of It" (whose theme he summed up in his 1930s memoir as "the gates of hell, shattered by affection") bore a resemblance, he felt, to Housman's poem "Hell Gate." He also, apologetically but warmly, re-asserted the strong feelings Housman's poems had inspired in him over the previous three decades. Housman's "all too rapid" reply (too rapid, perhaps, for him either to have assimilated the story or even received the volume?) was "absolutely hateful," Forster told his audience in the 1930s. What precisely Housman said will never be known, since Forster, disappointed and hurt, destroyed the letter "after one rapid perusal." Forster conjectured that he had been "forcing the pace," trying "for intimacy too soon," presuming as "a mere novelist" to compare his work with a poet's; one is tempted to fill the blank in the evidence by surmising also an anger in Housman that someone had guessed at that aspect of himself which he guarded so strictly. All these hypotheses at least describe a situation worthy of the emotions provoked on both sides.

A few months later, however, Forster discovered indirectly that Housman's reaction had perhaps pettier origins: he had apparently been annoyed with Forster for not dining more often in Trinity when Clark Lecturer, and longing for a pretext to express himself. "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?", one may feel; though to Housman it may have appeared that Forster's literary admiration did not extend to wanting his company much.²⁵ Whatever the true facts of the matter, when Forster, dining as a guest in Trinity late in 1929, unexpectedly found Housman sitting beside him, all that ensued was the

"constipated conversation" of "an elderly man and an old man in black gowns." To judge from Forster's 1930s memoir, Housman was mild and conciliatory. But the mention of Cape Town, which Forster had visited that summer and at whose university one of Housman's pupils had gone to teach, gave Forster the chance to score with a barbed remark. After that, he recorded, "we never spoke again."

What Forster had hoped for from Housman is suggested simply enough by some remarks he published on Conrad in 1920. There, noting Conrad's artistic nobility and the austerity of his character, he said that "one would like to offer him not only praise but friendship"; unfortunately, Conrad's caustic response to one incautious reviewer had shown that he "desires no good wishes from his readers: the anonymous intimacy, so dear to most, is only an annoyance and hindrance to him."27 Forster's own failure to move from admiration for Housman to friendship with him still rankled in 1934, and provided the sting in the tail of a magazine "Note on the Way" concerned with the kind of strength and comfort a reader could expect to gain from literature. Using Matthew Arnold as his example, Forster concluded that such general strength and comfort were distinct from practical help, and added: "I would no more consult [Arnold] about conduct that I would a great poet who is actually alive: Professor A. E. Housman."28 Of all his possible readers, only Housman could have recognised the true aim of this apparently random addition, and the full force of the word "conduct."

The general public, though, would have registered "great poet," and if Forster was disappointed in the man, his regard for the poems remained. In April 1930 he copied into his Commonplace Book Housman's poem beginning "Far in a western brookland" (ASL LII), placing it side by side with Tennyson's "Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea," whose line "But here will sigh thine alder tree" had already been echoed by Forster's sentence describing the departure of the Wilcoxes, and Margaret Schlegel, from Oniton: "It is not their ghosts that sigh among the alders at evening." (Chapter 24) Both poems are valedictory; yet even if, about seven years later, Forster called his involvement with Housman and his work "this long fool's errand" (himself echoing Last Poems IX), he chose to conclude his long memoir by reading the generous review of More Poems which he had published in The Listener after Housman's death in April 1936. Here he combined high praise for Housman's poems, "the vibrations, the motions of his heart," with the admission that "he was an unhappy fellow, and not a very amiable one." Freed of both inhibition and resentment, he ended his literary

obituary (appropriately published on Remembrance Day) with a note of sympathy he could never have expressed when Housman was alive: "Did he ever drink the stolen water which he recommends so ardently to others? I hope so."²⁹

Not long before this, though a "mere novelist," Forster had made an attempt to give voice to his equivalents of Ludlow, Bredon Hill, "Ony and Teme and Clun" and the "coloured counties," in the Abinger Pageant of 1934, its music provided by Ralph Vaughan Williams, who had also admired Housman and set his words, in 1909, in the song cycle "On Wenlock Edge." Forster found his "mythology" in a list of names, the Surrey houses and fields which were to become a "land of lost content" for him when he had to leave his home there in the October of 1946:

Hackhurst, The Shiffolds, The Dial, The Tolt, Canterbury Field, Great Spleck, Fillebar, Middle Maggots, the Dolly and Shaw in Dolly, Rainbow Field, Crooked Shy Field, Samsatchull, Trumpets, Great Slaughter Field . . . 30

¹ Howards End (1910), Chapter 33. (Penguin Edition, Harmondsworth, 1941, p. 249.)

² E. M. Forster, Commonplace Book (Facsimile Edition, Scolar Press, 1978), p.

41.

³ See P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life (London: Secker & Warburg, 197.), I, 153.

⁴ A. E. Housman, A Shropshire Lad, XXVII.

⁵ Both these documents are in King's College library, Cambridge. (I am indebted to Dr. Michael Halls, Modern Literary Archivist, for letting me read them, and also the Forster/Housman letters.) The quoted phrase occurs in the first, an ms. page inserted by Forster in his Diary for 8 December 1903 to 13 August 1909.

⁶ As well as A Shropshire Lad, Forster owned Last Poems (1922), More Poems (1936), the 1933 and 1939 editions of The Name and Nature of Poetry, A. S. F. Gow's A. E. Housman (1936), and the Penguin edition (1956) of Collected Poems.

⁷ See Furbank, I, 152-53.

⁸ The railway line from Much Wenlock to Craven Arms still existed in 1952, but was later dismantled as unprofitable.

⁵ The phrase occurs in the 1930s memoir, prefaced by a touch of irritation that suggests retrospective embarrassment: "One sentence still sticks in my memory and gizzard." In his short note of 1928, the word "admiration" replaces "homage" (crossed out).

10 See The Letters of A. E. Housman, ed. Henry Maas (London: Rupert

Hart-Davis, 1971), p. 65.

¹¹ John Swinnerton Phillimore (1893–1926), who had just become Professor of Humanity (Classics) at Glasgow University. There is a letter of 1919 from Housman to him in Housman, *Letters*, pp. 167–68.

12 1930s memoir, ms. at King's.

¹³ Forster gave his 1930s memoir to John Morris, who in turn presented it to King's in 1970. By then Morris had forgotten its date of composition, but annotated it as "read to one of the Cambridge societies." The date, establishable approximately by internal evidence, I should hazard as 1937; the memoir's familiar and sometimes feline tone, and an allusion to "Molly" (probably Molly MacCarthy), make me almost certain it was read not at Cambridge but to the Bloomsbury "Memoir Club" to which Forster had belonged for some years.

¹⁴ A Room with a View (1908), Chapter 2 (Penguin edition, 1955), p. 32. The stanza does not appear in any of the earliest versions (c. 1903) of the novel.

15 Lubbock, later author of The Craft of Fiction, had been a contemporary of

Forster's at King's.

¹⁶ One wonders whether Forster had obtained permission to quote the lines, always a matter Housman was touchy about. No letter in Maas's edition refers to this.

¹⁷ "She had bowed across the rubbish that cumbers the world" (Chapter 13); "the furtive yearnings that were beginning to cumber her soul" (Chapter 16).

18 1930s memoir.

19 Laurence Housman, A. E. H. (London: Cape, 1937), pp. 274-75. In-

terestingly, he gave only month and year for "Hell Gate."

²⁰ There is a xerox copy of this letter at King's; the original is the property of Bryn Mawr College, as is Forster's letter to Housman of 28 March 1928, referred to later.

²¹ The letter is not in Maas's edition. A contemporary one which is (p. 211) points up the promptitude of Housman's reply. Writing to Witter Bynner on 6 February 1923 to thank him for a book sent over two years before, Housman said: "I have a strong tendency to postpone writing all letters."

²² See Norman Page, A. E. Housman: A Critical Biography (London: Mac-

millan, 1983), pp. 130-31.

²³ The letter, dated 22 February 1925, is printed in Housman, *Letters*, pp. 227–28.

²⁴ Commonplace Book, Facsimile, p. 37.

²⁵ The quotation is from T. S. Eliot's "Gerontion." In fairness also to Forster, however, one should add that there is not a single reference to him or his work in Maas's edition of Housman's letters. If Forster wished for Housman's literary notice and admiration as well as for his friendship, he seems not to have obtained these either.

²⁶ 1930s memoir. Forster was fifty, Housman seventy.

²⁷ "Joseph Conrad: A Note," reprinted in *Abinger Harvest* (1936). (Penguin Edition, 1967), pp. 155–56.

²⁸ "A Note on the Way" (1934), reprinted in Abinger Harvest (1936). (Pen-

guin Edition, 1967, p. 89.)

²⁵ "Ancient and Modern." Review of A. E. Housman, *More Poems* and A.S.F. Gow, A. E. Housman, in *The Listener*, 11 November 1936, pp. 921-22.

³⁰ E. M. Forster, *The Abinger Pageant* (1934). Printed in *Abinger Harvest* (1936). (Penguin Edition, 1967), p. 373.

Forster, Eliot, and the Literary Life

P. N. FURBANK

The story has often been told of Forster's clash with T. S. Eliot at the time of D. H. Lawrence's death; and Forster's quietly crushing rejoinder to Eliot, who had demanded to know what "exactly" he meant by calling Lawrence "the greatest imaginative novelist of our generation," has been rightly admired. "Mr. Eliot duly entangles me in his web," wrote Forster. "He asks me what exactly I mean by 'greatest', 'imaginative' and 'novelist' and I cannot say. Worse still, I cannot even say what 'exactly' means—only that there are occasions when I would rather feel like a fly than a spider, and that the death of D. H. Lawrence is one of these."

This was the most significant confrontation between Forster and Eliot, but it might have a certain interest if I sketch in the rest of their tenuous, but actually rather friendly, relationship. The lessons that emerge from it, so far as Forster is concerned, are, first, the potentialities of humanism as a way of looking at literature, and, secondly, the rewards of good style in the leading of the literary life.

Forster and Eliot met casually at Garsington in 1922, but their relationship seems really to have begun with the founding of *The Criterion* in the same year. Eliot showed himself very eager for a contribution from Forster, and Forster gave him his engaging essay on "Pan" (the Indian masticatory), saying he hoped Eliot would like his "jape". A few months later Forster's book of Alexandrian sketches *Pharos and Pharillon* was published and, as he had intended, the essay on Cavafy, with its poems and quotations from poems in Valassopoulo's translation, provoked a flurry of interest. Eliot wrote to Forster, who was acting as Cavafy's agent, asking for some poems for *Criterion*, and

Forster sent him "Ithaca" and "The God Abandons Antony," inviting Eliot to help with the translation of this last. "As V[alassopoulo] says, what on earth is to be done about the last word (from Plutarch's 'Antony')? He can't translate it. I can't. Can you? The whole poem depends on it." Two years after this, Eliot published Forster's essay "The Novels of Virginia Woolf". 5

Meanwhile Forster, in a manner characteristic of him, had "ventured to send a line of protest" to Eliot, about a scathing review by F. S. Flint in *Criterion* of Edgell Rickword's *Rimbaud: the Boy and the Poet.* The review did no more than quote some clumsy sentences from Rickword's book, with the dismissive comment that "His English is so inadequate, his style is so clumsy, that he cannot be read without a constant irritation." This treatment, said Forster, "is surely foolish, and—when the victim is quite a young writer—worse than foolish." He himself had admired the book, but the point was not, as he told Eliot in a second letter (18 January 1925), that he set up his opinion against Flint's and Eliot's, for he was "an absolute outsider" in the matter of French literature. "But I feel very strongly that no book ought to be reviewed in that particular way."

It was the sort of ticking-off that Forster was inclined to administer from time to time—quite disinterestedly in the present case, for he did not know Rickword at that time—and Eliot took it in good part; and in September 1928 the two were in touch again as allies in the campaign against the Well of Loneliness prosecution. What this brings home to us is that both Eliot and Forster took very seriously their duties as men of letters and showed much skill in performing them. They were both generous encouragers of other writers, their contemporaries as well as the young, and both cared a good deal for the health of the literary scene. They both, moreover, possessed a public self as well as a private one. (Though here the likeness ends, for Eliot, if we are to believe Hugh Kenner, constructed his owlish public persona in a teasing and opportunistic spirit, whereas Forster's was a sort of "better self", essential to his whole enterprise as an artist.)⁷

Thus one might jump to the wrong conclusion about the famous clash over D. H. Lawrence. Forster's response was undoubtedly genuine and deeply felt—not so much in regard to Lawrence, for his admiration for Lawrence was probably a little overstated for the occasion, as in regard to his dislike of Eliot in his quibbling and logic-chopping mood. ("I lose all patience with him when he starts guarding himself," he wrote to James Kirkup on a later occasion. "B) His rejoinder to Eliot, however, should be seen as a public rather than as a personal

attack and one written according to a convention that Eliot would have approved.

This becomes clear if we set this confrontation beside an earlier one, represented by Forster's essay on Eliot, first published as "Some of Our Difficulties" in The New York Herald Tribune of 12 May 1929.9 It was Forster's instinctive response to works of literature to approach them in the same spirit as one would approach a human being-and moreover to hope that, as it were, the work might even make the first approach. (He noted in his Diary for 16 June 1908, apropos of Walt Whitman: "He is not a book but an acquaintance, and if I may believe him, he is more.") This is what I have loosely called the "humanist approach," and one sees at once how extremely relevant it was to Eliot, the author of the best-known of all statements of the need for "impersonality" in art. Forster's essay has, in fact, two inter-related themes: the rights and wrongs of Eliot's obscurity as a poet; and Eliot's doctrine of "impersonality", his conception of the creative artist as the servant or vehicle of tradition and as engaged in a "continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality". Eliot refuses to speak out: this was Forster's explanation. "He is difficult because he has seen something terrible, and (underestimating, I think, the general decency of his audience) has declined to say so plainly." In Forster's eyes, here lay the secret of Eliot and of his obscurity as a poet; and Eliot's critical theories and devious critical strategies were an attempt, brilliant but unconvincing, to disguise this wilful refusal as an impersonal necessity. By a neat turn, Forster rebaptises Eliot's "impersonality" as "inhospitality", and the repeated refrain of his essay is that Eliot wants no human commerce with his reader. "Most writers sound, somewhere or other in their scale, a note of invitation. They ask the reader in, to cooperate or to look . . . Mr. Eliot does not want us in."

Forster, in this essay, deliberately adopts a "man-to-man" tone. Eliot's drift, he says, is that whenever there are difficulties of comprehension, "the fault is always ours. It is not an explanation under which I propose to sit down." The tone is exactly calculated for this particular polemic, but it prompts the reminder that Eliot was by no means always tortuous and evasive in his prose, indeed had a whole range of voices and *personae*, and was sometimes robust in a style you might almost equally call "man-to-man". At all events he liked Forster's essay very much and wrote him an amused and admiring letter (10 August 1929). He told Forster that his remark about the "horror" which lay behind *The Waste Land* ("he has seen something terrible") was quite correct, and in fact, as an epigraph, he had originally intended

using Kurtz's words in *Heart of Darkness*, ending "the horror . . . the horror." Also he was pleased that Forster had spotted the element of "bluff" in his prose; it was certainly there, and he believed that he himself had been the first to detect it. As for the "impersonality" doctrine, Forster was right, of course, in guessing that there were private motives underlying it; nor was it more true as a doctrine, though on the other hand no more false, than its opposite. All the same, he thought it had had some value in its day.

Thus, when Forster and Eliot clashed over D. H. Lawrence, their dispute was not a new one. It was merely a more hostile repetition of the one they had already had over "impersonality" and over the rights and wrongs of obscurity. What is more, it seems not to have wrecked such mild friendship as existed between them, for in February 1931 Forster was once more writing friendlily to Eliot, in his favourite role of intermediary. His friend Leo Charlton had written an autobiography, Charlton, in the third person but was being told by his prospective editor at Faber's that he should change it to the first person. This, Forster told Eliot, would mean that "the writer's peculiar dryness and detachment would disappear," and he asked Eliot to pass the comment on—adding some friendly words about Eliot's "Ash Wednesday". The intervention worked, and Charlton was allowed to keep his "he"s.

Forster's attitude towards Eliot from now on was quite clear-cut and consisted of two sharply conflicting emotions, which nevertheless he had no difficulty in sustaining side-by-side. He was set in his dislike of Eliot's evasiveness and chilliness. It came out particularly over Eliot's obituary notice on Virginia Woolf in *Horizon*. 11 "I thought Eliot disgraced the human race," he wrote of this to his friend William Plomer (12 June 1941). 12 At first sight it is an odd reaction, for Eliot's was a distinguished piece of writing, and certainly very laudatory, describing Woolf as "the centre, not merely of an esoteric group, but of the literary life of London." But I imagine the point is, Forster considered a death, and such a death, as an occasion for personal feeling, whereas Eliot, characteristically, had produced a string of brilliant and impersonal generalisations—about the deficiencies of biography, the nature of literary coteries, and so on. "Desolation at the loss of a friend," he wrote in this article, was something "one keeps to oneself".

What Forster also disliked, increasingly, was what he thought of as Eliot's worship of pain. This forms the theme of his review of *The Cocktail Party* in *The Listener* of 23 March 1950.¹³ The sufferings of Eliot's heroine Celia, who is crucified over an ant-hill, are not merely dwelt upon but "gloated over," complains Forster; and "no doubt this is

consonant with the author's religious outlook and with his 'comedy'. But aesthetically, the sufferings disturb the reader and distract him . . . He hears the doctor-priests analysing the successful martyrdom as they sip their drinks, and he wonders."

On the other hand, having been an admirer of Eliot's poetry since the days of "Prufrock", he grew even more impressed by it as it shed its early obscurity; and Little Gidding struck him as altogether magnificent. In a broadcast to India on 9 December 1942 he spoke of it side-by-side with Yeats's "The Second Coming" and said he found in it "a voice more authentic than Yeats' and his slouching monster." His criterion was once more a humanist one: one could "trust" Eliot. "We may not agree with the voice, but we can trust it, it is speaking what it knows to be true."

This little story of Forster and Eliot, as it happens, receives a satisfying, and somehow memorable, close. In his eighty-fifth year Forster made an entry in his Commonplace Book, which not only sums up his attitude to Eliot but gives one rather cheerful thoughts about the uses of literature.¹⁴

Little Gidding—read aloud to myself, a good experience, providing just the right amount of absorption and of closure of introspection—which can become ill mannered. The sound of my voice made me behave better. And Eliot is good to read aloud. When The Dry Salvages came out in 19[41] I read it right off at her request to Kathleen Hilton Young and her patient Peter. Oneself as sole listener is even better and I shall repeat the new found pleasure. With Eliot? I feel now to be as far ahead of him as I was once behind. Always a distance—and a respectful one. How I dislike his homage to pain! What animal except the human could have excogitated it? Of course there's pain on and off through each individual's life, and pain at the end of most lives. You can't shirk it and so on. But why should it be endorsed by the school-master and sanctified by the priest until

the fire and the rose are one

when so much of it is caused by disease or by bullies? It is here that Eliot becomes unsatisfactory as a seer, as Coventry does as a shrine. That misfire-Cathedral has given Christ a green face and the Angel of the Agony matches for legs.

I write the above well aware of Polaris and Co. Extra pain may be ahead for me and millions of others. But its preponderancy won't make it more real. Even if Man is wiped out other forms of life may get comfortable.

4-1-63 [pp. 266-67]

¹ See my E. M. Forster: A Life (London: Secker and Warburg; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, 1978), II, 163–64.

² In Criterion, 1 (1923), 402–8. Letter from EMF to TSE, 1 April 1923. This and other Forster letters quoted here: Houghton Library, Harvard University.

³ In Criterion, 2 (1924), 432.

4 EMF to TSE, 11 March 1924.

⁵ In New Criterion, 4 (1926), 277-86.

⁶ EMF to TSE, 12 January, 18 January 1925.

⁷ Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. x: "He can give, for readers and interviewers alike, consummate imitations of the Archdeacon, the Publisher, the Clubman, the Man of Letters in Europe, the Aged Eagle, the Wag, and the Public-spirited Citizen."

⁸ EMF to James Kirkup, 6 May 1942. Owned by recipient. Apropos of

Eliot's obituary tribute to Virginia Woolf: see note 11 below.

⁹ See B. J. Kirkpatrick, A Bibliography of E. M. Forster (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968. Soho Bibliographies), C214, for later printings of this essay, with different titles.

¹⁰ TSE to EMF, 10 August 1929. Owned by King's College, Cambridge.

¹¹ Eliot, "Virginia Woolf," Horizon, 3 (1941), 313-16.

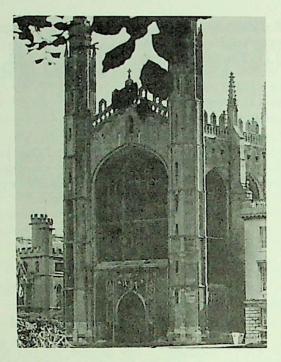
¹² EMF to William Plomer, 12 June 1941. Owned by University of Durham.

¹³ Forster, "Mr. Eliot's 'Comedy'," The Listener, 45 (23 March 1950), 533.

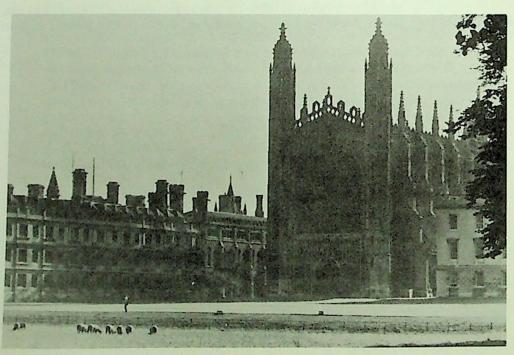
¹⁴ Forster's Commonplace Book, with Preface by Furbank, published in a facsimile edition by Scolar Press, 1978. An edition annotated by Philip Gardner is in progress.

¹⁵ Sir Peter (Markham) Scott (1909–), the naturalist and conservationist; son of Kathleen Bruce Scott by her first husband, the explorer Robert Falcon

Scott.



King's College Chapel, Cambridge University
Photographs by Bill Foster





Family and Indian mementoes Courtesy of P. N. Furbank



Forster, about 1960 Courtesy of P. N. Furbank



With an Indian friend, Delhi, 1945 Courtesy of P. N. Furbank



In France with Bob and May Buckingham Courtesy of May Buckingham, Bill Foster



Honorary Doctorate, University of Leiden, 1954 Photograph by "Anefo," Amsterdam Courtesy of P. N. Furbank



Jenny Mezgiems, May Buckingham, Philip Whichelo, Clive Buckingham at 11 Salisbury Avenue, Coventry, 6 July 1981, at unveiling of plaque marking the 100th anniversary of Forster's birth Photograph by Bill Foster

Towards a Literary History of Monteriano

S. P. ROSENBAUM

In his exhaustive annotated bibliography of writings on E. M. Forster up to 1975, Frederick P. W. McDowell lists 178 separate reviews, articles, notes, and books that discuss Forster's first novel, Where Angels Fear to Tread. The decade that followed has seen the publication of Forster's authorized biography, a two-volume selection of his letters. the continuation of the Abinger Edition of his works (including Where Angels Fear to Tread in 1975), and at least a dozen articles and books in which the novel is discussed. What more is there left to say that will be both new and true? Not much it would seem. There is a need, rather, for studies that synthesize the extensive critical, biographical, and bibliographical materials now available. Some recent book-length interpretations of Forster's work have done this with the criticism. Yet one aspect of Forster's writing continues to be scanted: its literary history. The work of P. N. Furbank, Mary Lago, Oliver Stallybrass, and Elizabeth Heine has done much to clarify the development of Forster's writing, but biography and bibliography are not substitutes for literary history. The generic and thematic relations of Forster's fiction and essays to that of his predecessors, contemporaries, or followers have still to be studied in any comprehensive way; the conditions governing the publication of his books and periodical writings remain largely unresearched; and the critical reception of his work has been examined only in McDowell's and Philip Gardner's compilations.¹

The modernist temper has been essentially a-historical, and in this respect Forster was very much a modernist. Time is the enemy in his lectures on the novel, where we are told that "History develops, Art stands still." Genuine scholars, he believes, can contemplate the river of

time and the borderland of literary tradition that lies between literature and history, but pseudo-scholars move around books rather than through them, avoiding the struggle with their meaning by relating them to the author's genius and the tendencies of his life and times.² Forster's dismissal of most literary history has been shared by his many synchronic critics. But post-modernist interpreters of his writings, no longer confident that history develops while art is fixed, certain only that both change, ought now to be moving around his texts as well as through them.

That is what I would like to do with Forster's first book. In trying to place it more contextually in literary history, I shall be rehearsing well-known facts of Forster's career and quoting familiar passages from his autobiographical writings; but some little-known information will also be used as well as a few unpublished letters by Forster's friends on his novel. To a certain degree the focus will be on the interrelations of Where Angels Fear to Tread and Forster's Cambridge milieu, which included various members of what was to become the Bloomsbury Group. Other kinds of literary history can be written about the novel Forster wanted to call Monteriano, but the Cambridge literary and intellectual backgrounds of Forster's early work are where they will mostly begin.

The origins of E. M. Forster's early novels are all intertwined. The first one, to be published in 1905, was actually his third attempt at a novel. Earlier Forster had written fragmentary drafts (now published as *The Lucy Novels*) of the Italian and English halves of *A Room with a View*, and while still at Cambridge he had begun a novel that was then abandoned for the first Lucy draft, which in turn was dropped for the work that became *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Forster's dissatisfaction with *Nottingham Lace*, as the Cambridge fragment has come to be called, was expressed at the time in a letter to his Cambridge mentor Lowes Dickinson:

I'm very discontented with the novel. I've tried to invent realism, if you see what I mean: instead of copying incidents & characters that I have come across, I have tried to imagine others equally commonplace, being under the impression that this was art, and by mixing two methods have produced nothing. I think I shall have a try at imagination pure & simple: though the result will be unsuccessful it will perhaps be more profitable. I think I have the photo-graphic gift of which you spoke: but till I'm sure I can do no better, I don't mean to use it unreservedly.³

In the short writings he began to publish a few years later in the Independent Review, which was edited by Dickinson and other Cambridge Apostles, Forster mixed his methods more successfully, and in Italy he began to envisage a different kind of conflict than he had been trying to represent between aesthetic and bourgeois English life in Nottingham Lace and The Lucy Novels. He began to think of an international conflict, a comedy in which England and Italy, reason and feeling, realism and imagination might be connected. "A sorry bit of twaddle" overheard in an Italian pension early in 1904⁴ appears to have coalesced with a masterpiece on the international theme that Henry James—the favorite novelist of the Apostles—published just the previous fall. Within the year Forster completed a draft of his first novel.

One of the troubles Forster said he had while writing it was what to call the novel.⁵ He referred to it as his "Gino novel" and considered "Rescue" as a title before deciding on Monteriano. His publishers rejected this title, but I shall follow Forster's wishes and accept it for the purposes of literary history. Two more titles, "From a Sense of Duty" and "Where Angels Fear to Tread," were suggested by Forster's friend the musicologist E. J. Dent, another Fellow of King's College at this time, who had helped introduce Forster to Italy. Forster said later in a Bloomsbury Memoir Club paper that about two-thirds of Dent became the central character Philip Herriton,6 but in a passage cancelled in the proofs of the novel, Philip is described as "my true and tried acquaintance, who on this occasion, as on so many others, feels and behaves as I do." It is possible, of course, that Forster is distinguishing here between the speaker and himself, and therefore Philip resembles the narrator not the author. But the description of Philip's face as "all confusion" below his good forehead, eyes, and nose, so that "those people who believe that destiny resides in the mouth and chin shook their heads when they looked at him," fits not Dent but Forster.7

"From a Sense of Duty" was also rejected as a title by Forster's publisher Blackwood and thus the novel became Where Angels Fear to Tread. "I quite agree it isn't 'me'," Forster wrote to his mother, but added "with all its faults—and it has many—it has the merit of describing the contents" (xii). When he sent a copy to Leonard Woolf in Ceylon, however, he crossed out the printed title and wrote in "Monteriano." The hackneyed partial quotation that Forster settled for does indeed describe the moral inaction of the novel's hero that contributes to the tragic consequences of his fool sister's rushing in, and there are

other inactive angels and busy fools in the novel as well. Santa Deodata, the patron saint of Monteriano so holy she would not help her mother after the devil had thrown her downstairs, is another angel in a novel that is as much about the relations of parents and children as about England and Italy. Forster described *Monteriano* as "a novel of contrasts" but the static placename he wanted for his title emphasizes only the Tuscany hill town (which he based on San Gimignano) without suggesting how the beauty, love, cruelty and vulgarity of Monteriano are partly defined by the civility, security, complacency, and pretense of Sawston.

A title Forster might have used to bring out the contrasts expressed in the novel's language of diplomacy was no longer available to him after the publication in September, 1903, of Henry James's The Ambassadors. For all the differences in age and achievement between the authors and heroes of Monteriano and The Ambassadors, between the length, prose style, point of view, plot structure, character types, settings, comedy, manners, and morals of these two texts, there are still some remarkable similarities which, together with the differences, show how Forster assimilated the influence of the greatest novelist then writing in English. Both novels tell stories of "poor sensitive gentlemen," as James once described his heroes, who are sent abroad by matriarchs to rescue relatives in love with foreigners. 10 Under the aesthetic and moral influence of life abroad, the gentlemen fail honourably as ambassadors through their unwillingness to act, and are succeeded by the more simple-minded and effective daughters of the matriarchs. The gentlemen meanwhile have changed sides and end up futilely in love themselves. In each novel the quest of the hero includes similar scenes. Strether dramatically encounters Chad, as Philip does Gino, in the theatre; revelatory interviews with Madame de Vionnett and Caroline Abbott take place in church; and both women finally weep openly before the loving, appalled gentlemen. There are stylistic echoes of James in Monteriano. "All the wonderful things are over," Caroline Abbott says in the last chapter. "That is just where it is" (144). Earlier, in the church, she says to Philip "You do understand wonderfully," which is purely Jamesean, and then adds: "You are the only one of us who has a general view of the muddle," which is purely Forsterian (119). And despite their melodramatic plots, the drama of each novel is one of consciousness, perception, understanding. But what is perceived and understood in Monteriano is very different from The Ambassadors. James showed Forster how the growth of moral awareness could be

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represented through a long story of personal relations in cultural conflict. Neither the relations nor the cultures in Forster's novel are like James's, however.

In his strictures on *The Ambassadors*, written a quarter of a century later in *Aspects of the Novel*, Forster complained that James had castrated his characters:

Their clothes will not take off, the diseases that ravage them are anonymous, like the sources of their income. . . . They remind one of the exquisite deformities who haunted Egyptian art in the reign of Akhnaton—huge heads and tiny legs, but nevertheless charming.

Forster concluded that unique as James's achievement was, "I do not want more of his novels, especially when they are written by someone else. . . ." No one takes off any clothes in Forster's first novel; Lilia has a baby, it almost seems, without being pregnant, and the cause of her first husband's death is as anonymous as the source of the Herritons' money. But it cannot be said that *Monteriano* is a James novel written by Forster. Not a single critic before Lionel Trilling appears to have noticed any resemblance, perhaps because the manner of narration and the tone of Forster's novel are so unJamesean. Though Philip's consciousness is reflected in a great deal of *Monteriano*, there are scenes and even whole chapters where he is absent; and when present he is always accompanied by that deceptively whimsical, penetratingly judgmental narrator whose voice links Forster's fiction and essays so firmly.

By not being concentrated on one angle of vision, Forster's novel becomes a story of contrasts between Sawston and Monteriano. Mrs. Herriton's ruthlessly proud management of appearances-including the outward manifestations of her family's behaviour—and the pathetic story of Lilia's fate in Monteriano have no counterparts in The Ambassadors, where Mrs. Newsome never appears and Chad's French life remains a mystery almost to the end. Flat characters such as Harriet appear flatter in omniscient narration than do Waymarsh or Mrs. Pocock from Strether's perspective. The ironies of Monteriano are more satirical than the ambiguous ones of a limited Jamesean point of view. Forster's scenes of farce, such as the night at the opera, derive from a delighted, uninvolved narrator, whereas the scenic intensity of James comes from the actors in his dramas. The views of provincial town life that the narrator, Philip, Harriet, Lilia, and Gino all provide are certainly more diverse than Strether's vision of Paris. They are also less complex. Monteriano's beauty contrasts with Sawston, as Paris does with New

England, yet the ways art helps to create this beauty are quite different in the two novels. Scenes in and around Paris appear to Strether as beautiful paintings. In *Monteriano* the frescoes of Santa Deodata and the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* are represented comically; they are part of the unJamesean, even unBloomsburian satire of aestheticism in Forster's Edwardian fiction. Love in different forms, not just in the appreciation of beauty, is what Philip must learn. This is finally his most important difference from Strether. *The Ambassadors* is a middleaged book, which makes Strether's appreciation of Paris and the love of Chad and Madame de Vionnet all the more moving. *Monteriano* is a novel of young men and women where the discovery of love is more urgent and uncertain.

Philip's discovery of love begins with beauty. "All the energies and enthusiasms of a rather friendless life had passed into the championship of beauty," the narrator informs us after Philip's first visit to Italy. But he achieves nothing at Sawston and falls back on his second gift, a sense of humour. He did not know, adds the narrator, "that human life and love of truth sometimes conquer where love of beauty fails" (54-5). Philip's progress in Monteriano is the discovery of these loves. "The object of the book is the improvement of Philip, . . ." Forster replied to his friend the Apostle R. C. Trevelyan's criticims of the novel, and his intention was that Philip "grows large enough to appreciate Miss Abbott, and in the final scene he exceeds her."12 This somewhat surprising final judgment of his characters reveals an ambivalence towards physical love in the novel. Philip, whose very name incorporates the word love, is described in the final chapter as having "reached love by the spiritual path," while the object of his love confesses herself to be "crudely" in love with Gino. Caroline can tell Philip this because she still believes he is "without passion"—a sexual angel in effect. Philip, shocked by his mistaking her love, imagines it mythically, first as Pasiphaë's infatuation with a bull and then-after she speaks of how Gino's regarding her as a goddess had saved her from the follies of Lilia's love—as the Moon's love for Endymion. Caroline insists Philip must get over thinking of her as refined, but even as she speaks she is transfigured beyond refinement or unrefinement for him: "Out of this wreck there was revealed to him something indestructible-something which she, who had given it, could never take away" (141, 145-7).

Philip's Platonic understanding of love remains ambiguous at the end of *Monteriano*, despite Forster's expressed intention. The "almost

alarming intimacy" of his relationship with Gino (140) emerges as an amusing homoerotic complement to his love for Caroline and her passion for Gino. Like Caroline, Philip has been saved, but by love rather than from it—and not just by the love of beauty, but by "human love and love of truth" as well. The culminating scene of his salvation begins in a sado-masochistic encounter with Gino; after being rescued by Caroline, he watches her maternal consolation of Gino and is converted. The description of the conversion is often quoted:

Philip looked away, as he sometimes looked away from the great pictures where visible forms suddenly became inadequate for the things they have shown to us. He was happy; he was assured that there was greatness in the world. There came to him an earnest desire to be good through the example of this good woman. He would try henceforward to be worthy of the things she had revealed. Quietly, without hysterical prayers or banging of drums, he underwent conversion. He was saved (139).

The sacrament of milk shared with Gino completes the conversion.

Several aspects of this scene are worth noting in Forster's literary history. First, there is use of religious language and imagery to describe a fundamental shift in attitude. In the early years of Bloomsbury at Cambridge, important changes in intellectual, moral, or aesthetic states of mind were frequently described in terms of conversion and salvation. 13 The evangelical heritage of Bloomsbury is an obvious source for such descriptions; often they are ironical, but not always. Philip is saved by love but not the love of Christ. Monteriano satirizes the Christianity of both Harriet's violent Protestantism and Monteriano's effete Catholicism. Philip's is a Platonic conversion. Human love and love of truth lead him up from his love of beauty to love of the good. Before being saved by the love of good Philip had been "trivial" in his moral passivity. Even Harriet had not been that. In Sawston he had led a divided life of pretense and reality, which he urged on Caroline as a way of living in an invincible society of dullness and spite while retaining one's ideals of splendour and beauty. Her reply-"Surely I and my life must be where I live"-illustrates for Philip "the usual feminine incapacity for grasping philosophy" (61-2). In Italy Philip's kind of idealism collapses. The Longest Journey, Forster's next completed novel, will trace the failure of this idealism in England.14

Philip's conversion to a Platonic type of idealism is also given a significant iconic form in *Monteriano*. Caroline holding Gino appears to Philip as a goddess of infinite pity and majesty like those he had seen in great pictures. When Philip found Caroline, Gino, and the baby to-

gether earlier in the novel, he saw "to all intents and purposes, the Virgin, Child, with Donor," and babies by Bellini, Signorelli, and Lorenzo di Credi are all invoked by the knowledgeable narrator for comparison (112). No particular painter is associated with the Mater Misericordiae image of Caroline that leads to Philip's conversion; she is simply likened to great pictures whose "visible forms" are inadequate for the greatness represented. In the formalist aesthetics of Bloomsbury which would develop out of Post-impressionism later in the decade, it was the form of a good picture that made its content irrelevant. The qualified formalism that Forster eventually espoused is only implicit in his first novel's use of pictorial analogies to express feeling, the feeling being predominantly comic. Santa Deodata's frescoes that Philip with his senses of beauty and humor admires mock his own inaction; like the saint he does not accomplish much (119).15 Painting analogies in Monteriano thus illustrate Philip's growth from aesthetic to moral awareness. As with Lucia di Lammermoor this is done through the representation of family relationships that comment humorously or seriously on the nature of love in Monteriano, whose international conflicts are mostly familial. Maternal feeling, or the lack of it, along with paternal are the dominant and limited forms of love that the novel critically presents. Monteriano is much more a Bloomsbury novel in its criticism of the family than in its aesthetic attitudes

The strongest love, according to the narrator of Monteriano, is that of parents for children, or at least fathers for sons. Gino's love for his is called

the strongest desire that can come to a man—if it comes to him at all—stronger even than love or the desire for personal immortality. All men vaunt it, and declare that it is theirs; but the hearts of most are set elsewhere. It is the exception who comprehends that physical and spiritual life may stream out of him for ever. Miss Abbott, for all her goodness, could not comprehend it, though such a thing is more within the comprehension of women (109).

Mothers in the novel, however, are rather unloving. Lilia easily abandons her daughter for a new husband. Mrs. Herriton's soulless devotion to the pretence of family pride wastes her son, Caroline Abbott tells him (120). Philip is allowed to say what he wants as long as he does what his mother wants (9). He can rebel only like Santa

Deodata, by doing nothing. Yet even the love of fathers and sons is governed by the unfortunate asymmetry that the narrator sees in family relations. "A wonderful physical tie binds the parents to the children," he observes,

and by some sad, strange irony—it does not bind us children to our parents. For if it did, if we could answer their love not with gratitude but with equal love, life would lose much of its pathos and much of its squalor, and we might be wonderfully happy (111).

"Equal love" in *Monteriano* appears only in Philip's vaguely fraternal relationship with his sister-in-law's husband Gino. (The relationship between Philip and his elder dead brother is never mentioned.) Philip's love for Caroline is Platonically filial. Her worship of Gino would not lead to a much more equal alliance than Lilia's or the "English" marriage Gino had arranged with a countrywoman to take care of his son.

Beneath all the domestic comedy of international manners in the first sustained piece of writing associated with the Bloomsbury Group, then, marriage and the family appear to offer little love or happiness. Instead there is manipulation, deceit, isolation, apathy, crime, and death. Some of this is the result of misunderstanding between the Northern woman and the Latin man, but much is inherent in the structures of English matriarchy and Italian patriarchy. Neither adequately solves what the narrator describes, in a remarkable essayistic passage on the difficulties of Lilia's marriage, as "the great question of our life." The solution has been found not in the hierarchy of the family but in the democracy of the café or the street, where "the brotherhood of man is a reality."

There one may enjoy that exquisite luxury of socialism—that true socialism which is based not on equality of income or character, but on the equality of manners.

In the early Edwardian years of this century Forster believed the ideals of social justice and love could be connected by means of equality in personal relations. Monteriano's "true socialism" has a price, however, that makes its equality of manners far from ideal. The brother-hood of man

is accomplished at the expense of the sisterhood of women. Why should you not make friends with your neighbour at the theatre or in the train, when you know and he knows that feminine criticism and feminine insight and feminine prejudice will never come between you! Though you become as David and Jonathan, you need never enter his home, nor he yours....

Meanwhile the women—they have, of course, their house and their church... Occasionally you will take them to the *caffe* or theatre, and immediately all your wonted acquaintance will there desert you, except those few who are expecting and expected to marry into your family. It is all very sad. But one consolation emerges—life is very pleasant in Italy if you are a man (35–6).

The homoerotic implications of this passage have been noted, ¹⁶ but more remarkable is the surprisingly contemporary feminist criticism from a man who much later would describe Virginia Woolf's feminism as old-fashioned. ¹⁷

Forster's representation of the pleasant life in Italy for men-and for "that privileged maniac, the lady tourist," (36)—in his early Italian fiction and essays gives them a good deal of their charm. It is understandable why he wanted to call his first novel Monteriano, for the town is depicted as an urban idyll of masculine life with its numerous phallic towers. 18 To reach it Philip has to leave the English realm of common sense, not for a fantasy world where there are no dentists, but for a classless society of brothers (15, 19). "There is no knowing who is who in Italy," observes the narrator when Philip is pulled into a party of Gino's friends at the opera (97). The remark is an English one, however. The Italians know who they are. The real subjects of Forster's Italian novels and shorter writings around this time are the English in Italy. In the character of Gino, his domestic arrangements and Italian friendships, Forster tried to imagine Italians apart from the English, yet even here the Englishness of the narrator conditions his point of view. Monteriano's true socialism is an English perception of the contrast between Italian equality of manners and English snobbery. The contrast is frequently comic, sometimes resulting from the incongruity of the perceiver's role and what is being perceived. The Baedeker description of Monteriano's fortifications is good illustration: "The view from the Rocca (small gratuity) is finest at sunset" (12). In Monteriano Philip's senses of beauty and humour expand. They do not require him to live a divided life, as in Sawston, and he wonders if the tower he contemplates, reaching from advertisements in the dark street up to the radiant sunshine, is a symbol of the town (90). In his relationship with Gino the brotherhood of man becomes more personal. From him Philip learns human love and from Caroline love of the good. He had considered himself an ambassador of civilization; they help him realize that the behaviour of the Herritons in Monteriano is finally barbaric.

The realism that Forster told Dickinson he had failed to invent in

his first attempt at a novel is created successfully in *Monteriano* through the mixture of experienced English and imagined Italian worlds. In the novels that Forster would go on to write, the structures of those dealing with the conflict of cultures are aesthetically more complete than those set entirely in England. *Monteriano* does not have a shape like the hourglass form Forster admired and regretted in *The Ambassadors*, ¹⁹ but the design of contrasts in his first novel is original and well made. The English/Italian shifts allow Forster both a realism so specific Virginia Woolf thought that social historians would find the book informative and a fantasy comprising the farcical and the surreal. ²⁰ There are Italian scenes where trainmen play touch-you-last and divas in the midst of tragic opera throw bouquets back to the audience. There are others of madness and violence with idiot messengers and night journeys; twice Gino turns into a kind of monster.

Through the use of allusions and other parallels Forster extends his realism humorously and seriously. On two occasions Philip ironically heralds changes at Sawston with "Here beginneth the New Life," (3, 57) and the dark wood of the novel's catastrophe is related to the opening of *The Divine Comedy* (24).²¹ A subtler analogue in some ways is Donizetti's transformation of Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*—a novel of tragic conflict in marriage and the family. In *Monteriano* this Italian Scottish opera is a brilliant example of the interaction of Northern and Southern cultures, with a literary tradition of comic reception that goes back, the narrator reminds us, to *Madame Bovary* (95). Forster concluded in *Aspects of the Novel* that fiction was likely to find its nearest parallel in music,²² and no less an authority than Benjamin Britten has suggested that the structure especially of *Monteriano* owes something to the musical form of opera:

the "classical" opera (Mozart —Weber—Verdi) where recitatives (the deliberately un-lyrical passages by which the action is advanced) separate arias or ensembles (big, self-contained set pieces of high comedy or great emotional tension) . . . The purpose of the big musical episode in Where Angels Fear to Tread is to dent deeper Philip Herriton's defences by confronting him with Gino at his gayest and most ingenuous. The scene, Lucia di Lammermoor at the Monteriano opera house, is long and gloriously funny. . . . But, as always with Forster (as with Mozart, too), under the comedy lies seriousness, passion, and warmth: the warmth of the Italians loving their tunes, being relaxed and gay together, and not being afraid of showing their feelings—not "pretending", like Sawston.²³

The recitatives of the narrator's voice (which at times are also lyrical), the arias of Philip and Caroline, their touching duets, the trios with Gino—all composed into a melodramatic story expressive of comedy and passionate seriousness—do make the Italian life in *Monteriano* operatic, in contrast to the careful Sawston life of pride and prejudice which derives from the English novel's tradition of domestic ironic realism.

The originality of Forster's first novel appears largely in his combination of these different national life styles. It is not surprising that his first readers were bewildered by the mixture, or that disagreement persists as to whether *Monteriano* is a comic masterpiece or a sad, even cold book.

The reception of a writer's first novel is important in the study of his development, and in literary history it takes on more significance as critics, writers, and other readers define the literary awareness of their time through responses to the new text. The nature of these responses bears on their interpretation; private opinions in letters or diaries should not be given the same status as public judgements in reviews. The reception of *Monteriano* among Forster's friends in Bloomsbury, Cambridge, and elsewhere interestingly supplements the public reaction to this unknown writer's first book but most of these came after its publication. The story of *Monteriano's* reception begins, in effect, with the conditions of its publication.

As with his shorter writings, Forster's first novel was influenced by a magazine. In the hope that Monteriano would be serialized, Forster sent it to the famous nineteenth-century periodical, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. Of the fiction that "Maga," as it was familiarly called, had been publishing in the early years of the century, only Conrad's "The End of the Tether" (1902) could be said to continue Blackwood's great Victorian reputation. Why Forster chose a Tory Scottish magazine instead of a liberal London one is not certain. It may well have had to do with the difficulties he had encountered trying to place his essays and stories. The very hospitable Independent Review was already scheduled to serialize, during the summer of 1905, the three parts of Forster's "The Eternal Moment," a story that reads at times like a late middle-aged sequel to Caroline Abbott's part of Monteriano. Blackwood's not surprisingly declined to serialize the unconventional novel of an unknown writer, while William Blackwood and Sons-the publishers of Scott, George Eliot, Trollope and Blackwood's Magazine-quite surprisingly accepted it for publication as a book. Forster had intended to send the book to Methuen (who had published *The Ambassadors*) or Heinemann.²⁴ The terms Blackwood offered were poor,²⁵ the title changed, and the novel unhelpfully advertised after the first reviews as "a story which puzzles the critics" (xiv). Still, Forster considered himself wonderfully lucky to be published by Blackwood.²⁶

Years later Forster recalled in a review of Edward Garnett's plays that he and C.F.G. Masterman were the only critics to take any notice of his first novel.²⁷ There was in fact a third, the still anonymous reviewer in the *Speaker*—a liberal paper that turned into the *Nation* a year later. The reviewer was almost certainly not Desmond MacCarthy, whose valuable *Speaker* theatre reviews of Shaw and others became the first important Bloomsbury work of literary criticism. The *Speaker* critic described as "brilliantly original" Forster's exposure of "Sawston's ideals and ways of life in the glare of the vertical Italian sun"; he thought that the novel was perhaps the first of a series of "quiet, refined, satirical studies" and hoped for a sequel that would restore Philip to Sawston's bosom. Caroline's love for Gino was the only part that bothered the reviewer, who expected some criticism of her romantic fervour.²⁸

C.F.G. Masterman had been one of the founding editors of the Independent Review and knew Forster's early shorter work. His reviews of Forster's first three novels praised them highly, and Forster in turn used Masterman's political writings in Howards End. Masterman's review of Monteriano for the Daily News, of which he was the literary editor, stressed like the Speaker's review the contrasts of Sawston and Monteriano (which he identified as San Gimignano). He saw the novel as a delightfully humorous liberal critique of both English and Italian life, but he made little of Philip's particular moral development.²⁹

The reviewer for the conservative *Spectator*—edited by the uncle of Lytton Strachey, who was beginning to review for the paper—foreshadowed the broad critical disagreement over the impact of *Monteriano* by finding the novel's story exceedingly clever but also "decidedly painful." Forster was nevertheless a writer to be reckoned with. Whether Forster knew it or not at the time, this was the best encouragement a young writer could have, because the anonymous reviewer was Edward Garnett. More than anyone else of his time, Garnett had the ability to recognize new literary genius. Before Forster he helped discover Conrad and afterwards D. H. Lawrence and even Virginia Woolf to the extent of recommending her first novel for publication. Garnett's review found several orthodox lessons in *Monteriano*, such as "the futility of ill-considered rebellion against conven-

tion." (Would Spectator readers have noticed the ambiguous qualification?) The dominant impression left on Garnett by the book is "that under the stress of opportunity primitive instincts reassert themselves in the most carefully educated and studiously repressed natures." Garnett even describes Gino as half Faun and half Satyr. This appreciation of Forster's first novel suggests links with Lawrence, but Garnett does not bring out the comic implications of the instincts and their repression in Forster's novel. At the end of his review he called not for another refined satire but "a story in which the fallibility of goodness and the callousness of respectability are less uncompromisingly insisted upon." 30

The divergence of these early serious, favourable reviews concerning the tone and the form of *Monteriano* as well as the moral development of its hero is continued in the responses of Forster's friends. Forster recalled in another memoir that the Countess von Arnim, author of the popular *Elizabeth and her German Garden*, who employed Forster for several months in 1905 as a tutor for her children in Germany, was alternatively disgusted and charmed by the realism and sentiment of the book (xi-xii). Julia Wedgwood, a family friend whose book on the moral ideal of love Forster helped to revise, was uncertain as to whether the novel was trying to be a tragedy or a comedy (xiii). Similar responses came from various Apostolic brothers of Forster, and their reactions are more important for the literary history of *Monteriano* because they shared Forster's intellectual milieu.

The most detailed criticism of the novel by an Apostle came from the poet R. C. Trevelyan. (Stallybrass usefully prints his letter and part of Forster's reply in an appendix to the Abinger edition.) Trevelyan in his friendly, energetic and obtuse way criticized the mixture of atmospheres in the book as well as Forster's facetiousness and style. With the style it was not only the Jamesean conceits that Trevelyan objected to but the "jarring modern notes and journalistic idiom" that he had also found in the writings of their friends Roger Fry and Desmond Mac-Carthy. "You ought always to try deliberately to write beautifully, ..." he argued with little understanding of what Forster's and Bloomsbury's evolving prose was trying to do (151). Forster's reply characteristically depreciates his own abilities as an artist or thinker while making an early and important statement of his artistic intentions as a writer. After asserting that the object of the novel was Philip's improvement, Forster admits to difficulties with the "surprise" method of plotting that springs Philip's love for Caroline on the reader, but he disliked sticking finger posts of implication around the book. As a novelist he had not

yet developed very fully the "rhythm" of repeated images and motifs that give coherence to his later works. But he felt the suggestion that a book should have but one atmosphere "pedantic":

Life hasn't any, and the hot and cold of its changes are fascinating to me. I determined to imitate in this and let the result be artistic if it liked. Naturally it did not like (149).

Forster's conviction that art should imitate life in the mixing of atmospheres remains a characteristic of all his writing, not just his novels and stories but his essays and biographies too. It is an aspect of his and Bloomsbury's eclectic pluralism in their art, thought, and life, and is essential to their modernity.

Trevelyan also reported to Forster that Lowes Dickinson and Maynard Keynes had liked *Monteriano* a great deal, and so had Desmond MacCarthy. Trevelyan was particularly glad MacCarthy had liked it because "his judgement is very valuable, and he never likes anything without very good reasons, and is the best critic of modern novels I know" (152). Another Apostle who had written to Forster about *Monteriano* was his close friend H. O. Meredith, who succeeded Dent as partial model for characters in Forster's next two novels. Meredith read the work in manuscript and compared it with that of his namesake, George Meredith—a comparison that has been made by others; he thought Forster might have managed subordinate scenes and unpleasant characters better, but felt he really understood tragedy and comedy (xii). An older Apostle, Bertrand Russell, found the novel clever and the novelist certainly talented, but he complained that the work was too farcical at times and too sentimental at the end.³¹

The least sympathetic criticism of *Monteriano* among the Apostles came from two future members of Bloomsbury. Leonard Woolf and Lytton Strachey were unprepared at this point in their careers for Forster's success as a novelist. Their correspondence constitutes an important Edwardian commentary on the development of Bloomsbury's thought and character as reflected in their views of Forster's novels. Strachey had nicknamed Forster the "Taupe," Leonard Woolf explained in a passage from his autobiography that illuminates his early criticism of Forster,

partly because of his faint physical resemblance to a mole, but principally because he seemed intellectually and emotionally to travel unseen underground and every now and again pop up unexpectedly with some subtle observation or delicate quip which somehow or other he had found in the depths of the earth or of his own soul.³²

On 29 October 1905, Leonard Woolf wrote to Strachey:

The Taupe sent me his book last week. It is really extraordinary that it is amusing as it is. It is a queer kind of twilight humor don't you think. I can imagine the taupes in their half lit burrows making jokes to one another in it or old ladies in musty close smelling suburban rooms revelling in it if they ever had any humour at all. He is I suppose certain to "make a name" for everyone will call it clever. What enraged me in the book was the tragedy. If it is supposed to be a tragedy it's absolutely hopeless; if it's supposed to be amusing, it simply fails.³³

Strachey was very much in agreement with this criticism and reported a meeting with Forster in January, 1906, which Strachey came away from feeling that Forster's acknowledged success was an unmistakable sign of Strachey's and Leonard Woolf's lapse; if they ever did succeed, how ashamed they would be.34 The Apostles' and Bloomsbury's contempt for success seems to combine here with simple jealousy. Leonard Woolf's career as a civil servant had to begin in Ceylon because of his relatively poor examination marks, and Strachev had just failed for a second time to win a fellowship at Trinity with a dissertation on Warren Hastings. But Leonard Woolf's attempt to define Forster's humour is nevertheless significant. He begins by admitting the novel is funny, but after trying to define the distinctiveness of the humour he concludes that Monteriano fails to be amusing. The claim of tragedy, which Forster does not make in the novel, deflects Woolf's appreciation of the novel's humour. Through the criticisms of Forster's Edwardian novels that Woolf sent Strachev there run exalted conceptions of the tragic and the real. Jaffna was a long way from Monteriano.

The critical reception of *Monteriano* was, like any writer's work, affected by Forster's subsequent books. The wider scope of *The Longest Journey, Howards End*, and *A Passage to India* increased the appreciation of the Italian novel's more elegant limits. Within Bloomsbury the most comprehensive assessment of Forster's career came from Virginia Woolf in the late Twenties. She admired the fantasy, penetration, and design of his first novel and placed it in literary history as a descendant not only of Jane Austen but also of Thomas Love Peacock, whom critics of Forster rarely seem to read. (Virginia Woolf's own uneasy relationship with the fiction of Henry James may have kept her from adding him to Forster's literary family tree.) The fantasy, penetration and design of Forster's writing have been widely discussed and much

praised since Virginia Woolf's essay but often without her qualification that Forster's was a divided talent.³⁵ Post-modernist critics should be able to analyze and appreciate this dividedness without the assumption that it limits his art.

Whatever these critics find to say, many common readers will probably continue to agree with the view of Desmond MacCarthy. Forster admired MacCarthy's literary judgement, which he thought aptly symbolized in MacCarthy's penname "Affable Hawk." MacCarthy wrote in a late letter to his close friend G. E. Moore, who was rereading Forster's novels and finding fault with them, that next to the last, he rather felt the most enjoyable of Forster's novels was the first. The same of the sam

¹ E. M. Forster: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him, comp. Frederick P. W. McDowell (De Kalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976). E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage, edited by Philip Gardner (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

² Forster, Aspects of the Novel and related writings [1927], ed. Oliver Stallybrass; Abinger Edition Vol. 12 (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), pp. 5–8, 14. All volumes in the Abinger Edition are published by Edward Arnold.

³ Forster, Selected Letters, ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (2 vols. Lon-

don: Collins, 1983), I, 51.

⁴ Forster, The Lucy Novels: Early Sketches for a Room with a View, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (1977); Abinger Edition Vol. 3a. For Nottingham Lace see Forster, Arctic Summer and other fiction, ed. Elizabeth Heine (1980); Abinger Edition Vol. 9, pp. 1–66. On the "sorry bit of twaddle," see Forster, "Three Countries," in The Hill of Devi and Other Indian writings, ed. Elizabeth Heine (1983); Abinger Edition Vol. 14, p. 291.

⁵ P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life (2 vols. London: Secker & Warburg,

1977-78), I, 123.

⁶ Forster, "My Books and I," Appendix B in The Longest Journey, ed.

Elizabeth Heine; Abinger Edition Vol. 15 (1984), pp. 300-6.

⁷ Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread [1905], ed. Oliver Stallybrass; Abinger Edition Vol. 1 (1975), p. 158. Cited in text hereafter by page numbers in parentheses. There are photographs of Forster and Dent as young men in Francis King's E. M. Forster and His World (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), pp. 35, 39.

⁸ In *Sowing: An Autobiography of the Years 1880–1904* (London: Hogarth Press, 1960), p. 172, Leonard Woolf actually gives "Monterians" as the title, but this must be a misreading or a misprint. "Monteriano" is the title of the original

manuscript, now Add. mss 57472-3 in the British Library.

⁹ Forster, "Three Countries," p. 291.

¹⁰ James, Literary Criticism: French Writers, Other European Writers, The Prefaces to the New York Edition, ed. Leon Edel and Mark Wilson (New York: The Library of America, 1984), p. 1250.

11 Forster, Aspects of the Novel, pp. 110, 112.

12 Forster, Selected Letters, I, 83.

13 Three months after the publication of Monteriano, for example, Maynard

Keynes wrote to Lytton Strachey about an epistemological paper of G. E. Moore's: "Oh! I have undergone conversion. I am with Moore absolutely and on all things—even secondary qualities. . . . But as the whole thing depends on intuiting the Universe in a particular way—I see that now—there is no hope of converting the world except by Conversion, and that is pretty hopeless. It is not a question of argument; all depends upon a particular twist in the mind." Quoted by R. H. Harrod in *The Life of John Maynard Keynes* (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 113. For discussions of the religious and philosophical backgrounds of Bloomsbury, see my *Victorian Bloomsbury*, forthcoming.

¹⁴ See S. P. Rosenbaum, "The Longest Journey: E. M. Forster's Refutation of Idealism," in E. M. Forster: A Human Exploration. Centenary Essays, ed. G. K. Das

and John Beer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 32-54, 287-89.

¹⁵ Forster's description of the frescoes indicates their similarity to those Ghirlandaio painted of Santa Fina in San Gimignano (*WAFT*, 180–1). Roger Fry, in Macmillan's *Guide to Italy* (1901), described Ghirlandaio's early work at San Gimignano as showing "an almost Flemish feeling for the literal rendering of interiors and still life" (p. li).

¹⁶ Alan Wilde, Horizons of Assent; Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Ironic Imagination (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981),

p. 57.

¹⁷ Forster, "Virginia Woolf" [1941], in Two Cheers for Democracy, ed. Oliver

Stallybrass; Abinger Edition Vol. 11 (1972), p. 249.

¹⁸ Claude J. Summers, E. M. Forster (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1983), p. 32.

19 Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 109.

²⁰ Virginia Woolf, "The Novels of E. M. Forster" [1927], in Collected Essays

(London: Hogarth Press, 1966), I, 342.

²¹ Philip's reluctance to take moral stands places him clearly in Dante's vestibule with those who have chosen neither good nor evil. The year after *Monteriano* was published, Forster wrote a Housman-like poem in which he described watchers who are "not good enough for Heaven / Nor bad enough for Hell..." (Furbank, E. M. Forster, I, 137). For connections between *Monteriano* and Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, see John Purkis, "Where Angels Fear to Tread": The Nineteenth Century Novel and Its Legacy. Unit 28. (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press).

²² Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 116.

²³ Britten, "Some Notes on Forster and Music," in Aspects of E. M. Forster, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), pp. 82–3.

²⁴ See Forster, Selected Letters, I, 67.

²⁵ Stallybrass quotes a letter from Forster to his mother in which he says Blackwood offered no royalties on the first 300 copies, 10% on the next thousand, 15% up to 2,500, and then a shilling a copy (xi). 1050 copies were printed at 6 shillings each and another 526 in January 1906. See B. J. Kirkpatrick. A Bibliography of E. M. Forster. Rev. ed. (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), p. 19.

²⁶ Forster, Selected Letters, I, 78.

²⁷ Forster, "The Man Behind the Scenes," News Chronicle (London), 30 November 1931, p. 4.

²⁸ Philip Gardner, ed. E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage, pp. 50-51.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 52-5.

³⁰ See George Jefferson, Edward Garnett: A Life in Literature (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), p. 101; Gardner, The Critical Heritage, pp. 56–58.

31 Bertrand Russell, Autobiography: 1872-1914 (London: Allen and Unwin,

1967), I, 180.

32 Woolf, Sowing, p. 172.

³³ Leonard Woolf Papers, University of Sussex, 28 October 1905. Quoted by kind permission of Mrs. Trekkie Parsons.

34 Strachey Papers, Berg Collection, The New York Public Library.

³⁵ Virginia Woolf, "The Novels of E. M. Forster," Collected Essays, I, 344-45.

³⁶ See Rosenbaum, ed., The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs Commentary, and Criticism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 156-57.

³⁷ MacCarthy to G. E. Moore, 17 July 1948. G. E. Moore Papers, University of Cambridge Library.

E. M. Forster's Critique of Laughter and the Comic: The First Three Novels as Dialectic

RICHARD KELLER SIMON

E. M. Forster's first three novels, Where Angels Fear to Tread, The Longest Journey, and A Room with a View are an intricately interrelated sequence of fictions, a dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Similar to one another in setting, character type, and plot, the novels are much more than simple repetitions on a basic formula; they are a carefully structured set of variations on a common theme, so arranged that each variation repeats, inverts, and negates the variation that has come before. Each novel is concerned with the muddle created by buffoons who laugh too much, boors who laugh too little, and perfectly balanced wits who laugh in moderation, and in each a central character or characters must make choices among these three alternatives. But each novel is given a very different narrative treatment. Where Angels Fear to Tread is written in the mocking style of the buffoon, The Longest Journey in the excessively serious style of the boor, and A Room with a View in the perfectly balanced style of the moderate laugher.1 Thus Forster's three novels offer the reader precisely the same alternatives that the three character types offer the central characters within the novels. Form and content are the same. And while the basic distinction between buffoon, boor, and wit is not original with Forster-it appears for the first time in Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics and is regularly used by English comic novelists from Fielding and Sterne to Meredith and James, to distinguish between character types—Forster's application of this three-part schema is far more elaborate than that in any of his earlier models. Using Aristotle twice, once to determine content and once to determine narrative tone, he transforms the standard three-part sequence into three versions of the three-part sequence, a dialectic of dialectics. It is also a progression from simple to complex, from extremes to the mean.

Whatever their value and meaning as individual novels, and few critics have considered them among Forster's most important work, as a novel sequence they are virtually unique in the history of English fiction.² Far more sustained, complex, and imaginative than any other single evaluation of mockery and seriousness based on the Aristotelian model, Forster's novel sequence is an important work of comic fiction and comic criticism. Because the relationship between laughter and seriousness is simultaneously the fundamental structuring device of the novel sequence, and one of its central themes—the obvious passion/repression dichotomy is, for example, carefully overlaid on the laughter/seriousness dichotomy—Forster should be understood not only as a comic novelist, but as a novelist whose subject is the comic. The novels are substantial explanations of mockery and seriousness, alternately comic and serious, alternately serious critiques of mockery and mocking critiques of seriousness.

Forster derives this evaluation of laughter and the comic in part from Aristotle, in part from James Sully, whose An Essay on Laughter, Its Forms, Its Causes, Its Development, and its Value was published in 1902, the year Forster began work on the first novel.3 The use of Aristotle and of Sully in these novels is so extensive and ingenious that they can be said to be generated by the synthesis of ancient and modern comic theory. Onto the most ancient of authorities Forster imposed the most recent, thereby effecting a synthesis of opposites, another mean between extremes of the sort praised by Aristotle. Forster's novels are neither an elaboration of the old, nor of the new, but of both at the same time. In all three novels there are obvious combinations of ancient and modern, as in the Pan figures and pagan grottoes that reappear in the contemporary world. But behind this content are a pattern and rhythm built on Aristotle and Sully, less visible but no less important combinations of the ancient and modern. In An Essay on Laughter Sully argued that the playful laugh of the common man, the great heritage of "Merry England," had been replaced by the hollow and cynical laugh of the educated and the world-weary, and he blamed this decline in joyful laughter on modern civilization, education, material prosperity, and cultural refinement. In late nineteenth-century comic theory this position was unusual—the prevailing opinion was just the opposite, that laughter was becoming more kind, gentle, and positive. Meredith, for example, had equated the comic spirit with civilization and refinement. Forster took Sully's side in the debate and imposed Sully's dichotomy onto his Aristotelian model. In each of the novels, Forster's buffoons are highly educated, prosperous, often allied with the aristocracy, and miserably unhappy—their laughter is either a symptom of that unhappiness, or an attempt to treat it. Contrasted to them are individuals who hold the comic in perfect balance with the serious, the Aristotelian mean between extremes, and in Forster's version these are the simple workers, relatively untouched by civilization and its discontents. They appear to be meant as deliberate echoes of the peasantry of the preindustrial world, and their laughter is a joyful celebration of life, eroticism, freedom. What Sully proposed in 1902, Forster made into his fictional demonstrations of 1905–1908.

About the special responsibilities of future individuals, Sully wrote at the very end of his essay: "In this work of conserving human laughter they will do well, while developing the thoughtfulness of the humorist, to keep in touch with the healthiest types of social laughter, the simple mirth of the people preserved in the contes and the rest, and the enduring comedies. If a few men will cultivate their own laughter ... we may hope that it will not die ... but be preserved by a few faithful hands for a happier age" (432). It was this project which the young Forster took up. "Parody or adaptation have enormous advantages to certain novelists," Forster wrote in Aspects of the Novel, "particularly to those who may have a great deal to say and abundant literary genius, but who do not see the world in terms of individual men and women-who do not, in other words, take easily to creating characters. How are such men to start writing? An already existing book or literary tradition may inspire them-they may find high up in its cornices a pattern that will serve as a beginning, they may swing about in its rafters and gain strength"4 An already existing book-Sully's An Essay on Laughter and a literary tradition, English comic fiction with its extensive use of Aristotle-served as Forster's beginning. Swinging about in their rafters, he gained strength as a writer and wrote a series of remarkable theoretical fictions.

II

Forster worked on the manuscripts of these novels at the same time, publishing final versions between 1905 and 1908. The order of publication is significant. He began with Where Angels Fear to Tread, the buffoon's story, and the simplest of the three novels in structure. There is one buffoon, Philip Herriton; one boor, his sister Harriet; and one natural comic man, Gino Carella, who combines laughter and seriousness. Two women, Lilia Herriton and Caroline Abbott, make choices among these three figures and the attitudes they represent, but although both choose Carella, no real alliance with him is possible. His comic nature, sensual and uncivilized, is too powerful for them—Lilia is destroyed and Caroline retreats. Philip also is drawn to Carella, but withdraws instead to his protected position of mockery at the end of the novel. Forster's primary attention in this novel is on the buffoon, Philip, and the story is written in a mocking and detached style. Very little is taken seriously, and then not for very long; in spite of a series of sudden deaths, and other moments of melodrama, the comedy of manners tone resumes as the novel ends.

The Longest Journey, the boor's story, is more complex. Forster's primary attention is now not on the mocker, but on his dialectical negation, the object of mockery, Rickie Elliot. And everything is doubled—there are two buffoons, Rickie's father Mr. Elliot and aunt Mrs. Failing; two boors, Rickie's wife Agnes and his brother-in-law Herbert; two perfectly balanced laughers, Rickie's friend Ansell and his half brother Stephen; and two victims, Rickie himself and his mother. With this doubling of the character types, more subtle refinements are possible in the model—neither of the doubled pairs is precisely the same. The novel, a dialectical negation of the excessively comic first version, is a serious and sometimes melodramatic story of the destruction of Rickie and his mother—almost nothing is taken comically. Although Rickie understands that his salvation is with Stephen and Ansell, shortly after he attempts such an alliance, he is killed in a train accident.

A Room with a View, the perfectly balanced laugher's story, is the most complex—although it does appear to be the least experimental of the three. There are once again two buffoons, Cecil Vyse and Freddy Honeychurch; two boors, Charlotte Bartlett and Mr. Emerson; and two means between them, the Rev. Mr. Beebe, and George Emerson. Forster's primary attention is now on Lucy Honeychurch, who must choose among these suitors, advisors, and friends—she is the dialectic negation of Rickie Elliot, for she is not a victim, and not destroyed, and at the end she successfully aligns herself with George Emerson. But here Forster plays with the Aristotelian formula, altering it in a number

of ways, and no longer taking it seriously. The apparently amiable and sympathetic Beebe, a perfect mean between extremes, is revealed at the end of the novel as a danger to Lucy, and the apparently hostile and boorish Charlotte Bartlett is revealed at the end of the novel as an aid to Lucy. George Emerson himself begins the novel as a depressed melancholic—it is only from repeated contact with Lucy that he is reborn as a natural comic man. The flat characters of the first two novels change very little; in the final version they give way to round and complex characters. And unlike the two earlier novels, this one has a happy ending. Neither excessively mocking, nor excessively serious, it celebrates the comic mean as actuality.

It is as if three different narrators were presented with an identical situation and asked to develop it according to their own fancies. Although they could not change what was given—the three comic character types; the basic elements of a comic plot, young men and women falling in love, blocking characters, friends and advisors; the comic themes of renewal, rebirth, and festival—they could do what they would to everything else.

By rearranging the same basic elements of setting, plot, and character, thereby altering the pattern and rhythm of the story, Forster set up a series of texts and counter-texts. The settings establish part of that pattern. Northern Italy is used in the first and third novels, while the London suburb of Sawston is used in the first and second novels. An enchanted Italian field of violets occurs in the first and third novels, while an enchanted English dell occurs in the second and third novels. A carriage ride ends in sudden death in the first novel, and a train ride ends in sudden death in the second, but in the third, the sudden death and the carriage ride are separate incidents, connected only by the passions they set loose in two of the major characters. Among these character types, an effete and sensitive young man and a strong and insensitive young man (who may grow more sensitive) appear in the first and second novels: Phillip Herriton/Gino Carella, and Rickie Elliot/Stephen Wonham, while in the third novel, the dichotomy is reversed; the effete young man is now insensitive, and the strong young man extremely sensitive: Cecil Vyse/George Emerson. There are comparable distinctions to be made for the female characters: a repressed but sensitive young woman who loses some of her repressions, and a repressed and insensitive young woman who does not appear in the first and third novels: Caroline Abbott/Harriet Herriton, and Lucy Honeychurch/Charlotte Bartlett, while in the second novel, the repressed and sensitive young woman becomes even more repressed, and the repressed and insensitive young woman is replaced by a repressed and insensitive older man: Agnes Pembroke/Herbert Pembroke.

There are similar patterns of repetition and inversion throughout the novel sequence. Another female character type, the sensitive woman destroyed by marriage, appears in the first and second novels: Lilia Herriton and Agnes Pembroke, while in the third novel the type is altered to become the sensitive woman saved by marriage: Lucy Honeychurch. While Lilia and Lucy are presented sympathetically, Agnes is not. Lilia has a weak but loving female chaperone, Caroline Abbott; Agnes has a harsh and unloving male chaperone, her brother Herbert; Lucy has a weak but unloving female chaperone, Charlotte Bartlett. The first important event of the first novel is Lilia's marriage to Gino; the last major event of the last novel is Lucy's marriage to George. (Between them, at the middle of the middle novel, is Rickie's marriage to Agnes.) How deliberately Forster has set up the parallels between these beginning and ending marriages can be seen in the small details, the initials of the two couples, Lilia Herriton/Lucy Honeychurch, Gino/George, and some of the dialogue. "Oh, I am so sorry," Lilia cries out at the very beginning of the first novel, as she laughs at a crowd of well-wishers at the train station, among them an unimportant and ineffectual English suitor, "but you do look so funny" (3). "I'm very sorry," Lucy cries out early in the third novel, as she laughs at an important and ineffectual English suitor George Emerson. "You'll think me unfeeling, but-but-" (27). They sound so much alike not because Forster was unconsciously writing the same novel over and over again, but because he was consciously writing three treatments of the same novel.

III

Where Angels Fear to Tread establishes the pattern and the theme of the novel sequence. Beginning with Lilia's comic laughter as she departs by train from London and ending with Philip's attempts to provoke Caroline Abbott to laughter as they return by train to London, the novel is a mocking attack on mockery. Between these symmetries are other contrasts, Philip's cynical mockery, a sign of his weakness, and Gino's playful laughter, a sign of his strength. Two major episodes of the plot are paired at the center of the novel, the moment of comic celebration when Philip and Gino come together as friends at the opera, following the mad aria in Lucia di Lammermoor, when the two are

swept up in joyful laughter; and the moment of melodramatic crisis when the baby is killed in the carriage accident, and Harriet laughs her own insane aria. The first episode brings the two men together and the second separates them. If *Lucia* is meant as an artistic parallel to the novel itself, then it is laughter which Forster substitutes for an operatic score.

Both prologue and epilogue, Lilia's and Caroline's departure for Italy at the beginning, and Philip's and Caroline's return from Italy at the end, bracket the central action of the novel with laughter. The first articulate sounds heard in the novel are Lilia's "ungovernable peals of laughter"(1) as she watches the crowd of well-wishers bid her and Caroline goodbye. When a bungling male admirer brings her a footwarmer which he holds as if it were a tea-tray, she laughs again, as already noted. Forster writes: "And laughing helplessly she was carried out into the fog"(3). The novel ends with a conversation between Philip and Caroline as they return after the story's melodramatic plot has been played out. "So laugh at me," Caroline tells him as she confesses her passion for Gino, and asks to be cured by Philip's wit: " '... you look on life as a spectacle; you don't enter it; you only find it funny or beautiful. So I can trust you to cure me. Mr. Herriton, isn't it funny?' She tried to laugh herself, but became frightened and had to stop" (145-6). Philip does what she wants. "A flippant reply was what she asked and needed—something flippant and a little cynical. And indeed it was the only reply he could trust himself to make" (146). After that the novel ends, on a joke designed to get the reader laughing too, a joke about smuts flying in Harriet's eyes that is repeated throughout the novel. What is not clear at the beginning of the story is how vulnerable Lilia becomes as she is carried out into the fog laughing helplessly. At the end, when the motif is played back again, laughing is clearly a sign of emotional emptiness, renunciation, resignation. And the reader is then provoked to join in with the laugh. In the first scene the friend holding the footwarmer as if it were a tea-tray is comic, and, in the last, so is the reference to smuts flying into Harriet's eyes, but in both cases it is the laugher who is in danger-Lilia, who does not understand the seriousness of the world that awaits her, and the reader of the novel, who is about to move on to the next novel in the sequence.

Within the frame of these two laughs is the story about laughter, in which both Lilia and Caroline are almost incidental figures. Forster's primary interest is on the excessively comic Philip, the excessively serious Harriet, and the comic mean between them, Gino. There is a careful and elaborate parallelism of their laughs throughout the story.

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Harriet is mortified by Philip's laughter at her values. "It's a shame, mother!" she complains, "Philip laughs at everything-the Book Club, the Debating Society, the Progressive Whist, the bazaars. People won't like it. We have our reputation" (9). Philip is mortified by Gino's laughter at his behavior. When Philip offers the boorish and comically dressed Gino money not to marry Lilia, Gino responds with laughter: "... his chest began to heave and his eyes to wink and his mouth to twitch, and suddenly he stood erect and roared forth his whole being in one tremendous laugh" (29). A moment later Gino "gasped and exploded and crammed his hands into his mouth and spat them out in another explosion, and gave Philip an aimless push, which toppled him onto the bed" (29). The mocker suddenly becomes the object of mockery and cannot endure it—Philip leaves Monteriano the next morning, humiliated. When Gino is confronted by Lilia with his infidelities, he laughs again. "'You laugh?' stammered Lilia, 'Ah,' he cried, 'who could help it? I, who thought you knew and saw nothing-I am tricked-I am conquered. I give in' " (50). In fact Gino does not give in, and Lilia never again confronts him. His laughter serves as a weapon. Philip laughs at Monteriano in general, and over the absurdity of being sent by his mother to purchase Lilia's baby in particular. It is an attitude that confounds Caroline Abbott. "Anyone gets hold of you and makes you do what they want," she later tells him. "And you see through them and laugh at them-and do it" (120). But Philip, who suspects Caroline is in Italy because Gino might have already sold the baby to her "for a joke; it was just the kind of joke that would appeal to him" (82), is suspicious of her motives. As for Gino, all Philip can remember is his laughter at their last meeting. When Caroline tells him Gino is sorry about the laughter, Philip is filled with pleasure, and when he meets Gino at the opera, both are swept up by the laughter and the passion set free in the audience, and by that laughter both are brought together as brothers: "... enchanted by the kind, cheerful voices, the laughter that was never vapid, and the light caress of the arm across his back" (97). Laughing "hilariously" (96), Philip is won over. "I've forgiven him. Oh, but he has a sense of humour!" (98). And they are laughing at a tragic opera. But the novel is not over, and when Harriet steals the baby that Philip will no longer negotiate for, the result is a carriage accident and the death of the infant. And it is here that Harriet laughs for the first time in the novel-because she has absolutely no sense of the comic, this laughter is the sign of her madness.

The novel makes clear that Philip, who has not taken his mission seriously, and Harriet, who has taken it far too seriously, are both

responsible for this catastrophe. Opposed to these extremes, and half way between them, is the natural comic man, Gino; and although he is emotionally insensitive during much of the story, sometimes unconsciously cruel, he becomes a gentler and more sympathetic figure by the end. And although the novel does endorse Gino at the very end, when both Philip and Caroline confess their passion for him, the narrative tone of the novel remains much closer to Philip's cynical mockery. The narrator can never quite take seriously the events he is describing: the boorish Harriet, into whose eyes smuts are always flying; the comically overbearing Mrs. Herriton, who tries to learn about Italy from "Childe Harold" and Mark Twain; the buffoonish Gino, son of a provincial Italian dentist, introduced into the novel eating spaghetti and wearing a gigantic checked suit that does not fit; the proper Miss Abbott, who is showered with dirty water by Gino's housekeeper while on her mission of mercy; the holy maiden of the Dark Ages, herself, celebrated in the Church of Santa Deodata for her paralysis—so holy that she would not eat, play, or work. "The devil, envious of such sanctity, tempted her in various ways.... When all proved vain he tripped up the mother and flung her downstairs before her very eyes. But so holy was the saint that she never picked her mother up, but lay upon her back through all, and thus assured her throne in Paradise. She was only fifteen when she died, which shows how much is within the reach of any school girl" (79). The narrator invites the reader to laugh with him, to laugh in the very way which the novel is demonstrating is limited and dangerous. The novel, anticomic in content, is comic in technique. The excessive laugher is revealed throughout as a pathetically weak figure who uses mockery to deny his own passion. It becomes his only real orientation to the world.

IV

The second novel, *The Longest Journey*, lacks this comic tone, and after a single moment of slapstick early in the novel (Herbert Pembroke speaking with his mouth full of meringue and coffee grounds) the story is grim and unrelieved. The mocking narrator is replaced by one who has almost no sense of the comic and who therefore converts the story into stark melodrama. The story he tells, however, is structurally very similar to the novel that has come before. In addition to the division of characters into the three familiar types, excessive laughers, non-laughers, and moderate laughers, the novel is divided into three sec-

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tions, Cambridge, Sawston, and Wiltshire, respectively settings of excessive laugher, excessive seriousness, and the mean. At Cambridge Rickie Elliot discovers merry pagan laugher—his college house has "the merriest staircase in the buildings!" (9), and in the secluded dell nearby he learns that "he could even laugh at his holy place and leave it no less holy" (19). When he wrestles there with Ansell before both leave Cambridge, he laughs with exuberant joy, but when he goes to humorless Sawston to take a teaching job nothing is amusing anymore or a source of joy, neither his career with Herbert, nor his marriage to Agnes. At Wiltshire on the other hand he finds both low comedy and high seriousness-Cadover, his aunt's estate, is "an extraordinary place" in which "one must never be astonished at anything" (101); "... the lawn ended in a Ha-ha ('Ha-ha who shall regard it?')" (104). Laughter has symbolic meaning for its inhabitants; the pun indicates that the ha-ha functions as an invisible but effective boundary. The Wiltshire section of the novel also includes Rickie's visit to the Ansell family house, another comic/serious place. "The spirit of a genial comedy dwelt there. It was so absurd, so kindly.... Metaphysics, commerce, social aspirations-all lived together in harmony" (281). That environment produces Ansell, "a Hebrew prophet passionate for satire and the truth" (244).

Laughter is once again a primary element of the plot, but if it provides Philip Herriton and Caroline Abbott at the end of their story with some protection against passion, in The Longest Journey it leads Rickie Elliot to his destruction. Raised by a father with a cruel and unforgiving laugh and a mother with a gentle and loving laugh, then torn between his laughing friends at Cambridge and the serious Pembroke family, he is finally tested by his aunt, another cynical laugher, who in her desire for amusement confronts him with his half brother Stephen, another loving laugher. The original configuration of father and mother is thus repeated in aunt and brother, with the sex roles reversed: "... the world being what it is, the longer one is able to laugh in it the better," his college bedmaker explains (10), but as the story unfolds, the bedmaker's advice appears far too simplistic. Named Rickie by his father as a joke (because he was rickety), he is then rejected by him-"Why does father always laugh?.... Why does he always laugh at me? Am I so funny" (24-5). "He's a joke of which I have got tired" (27) the father explains. When his mother complains about his attitude, she is accused of lacking a sense of humor. And when she buys a carpet that clashes with the dining room furniture, his father "laughed gently" (24) and abandons the family. Rickie is brought

up by his mother, who laughs as much as his father, but quite differently. "You have no sense of humour, have you mummy?" he asks her. But when she looks amazed, he tells her "You told him so this afternoon. But I have seen you laugh. . . . I have seen you laugh ever so often. One day you were laughing alone all down in the sweet peas" (25). His father, visiting and finding a would-be suitor calling on his mother, calls it "French comedy of the best type" (253) and encourages the mother to carry on an affair. The suitor is Robert, a gentle farmer with his own sense of humor. "People sometimes mistook him for a gentleman until they saw his hands. He discovered this, and one of the slow, gentle jokes he played on society was to talk upon some cultured subject with his hands behind his back and then suddenly reveal them" (247). When the mother with her joyful laughter and her lover with his gentle laughter travel to Stockholm to flee Mr. Elliot, the lover drowns while swimming. "I heard him call," she explains, "but I thought he was laughing. When I turned, it was too late" (256). The child that is conceived, Rickie's half brother, is put in the care of Rickie's aunt Mrs. Failing, a woman whose real failing is her sense of humor. Her forehead is "wrinkled with an expression of slight but perpetual pain. But the lines round her mouth indicated that she had laughed a great deal during her life, just as the clean tight skin round her eyes perhaps indicated that she had not often cried" (92). Rickie asks Agnes, "Don't you think there are two great things in life that we ought to aim at-truth and kindness? ... My aunt gives up both for the sake of being funny" (132). Mrs. Failing raises Stephen, not according to truth and kindness, but for the sake of being funny, dressing him as a shepherd, encouraging him not to shave, educating him with such tracts as "A comic edition of the book of Job, by 'Excelsior,' Pittsburg, Pa. 'The Beginning of Life,' with diagrams. 'Angel or Ape?' by Mrs. Julia P. Chunk" (96). Stephen's childhood is thus exactly paralleled to Rickie's-both are victims of the same cruel humor. The crisis of the novel is precipitated when Mrs. Failing decides to introduce Rickie and Stephen, then to inform Rickie that he has a brother. She thinks it will be entertaining. "The comedy is finished" (147), she tells Agnes, and later when she informs Stephen, she hurls the family documents at him, saying "A leaf out of the eternal comedy for you ..." (233). Stephen takes the joke better than Rickie does, for although he has been partially maimed by being made into comic entertainment for Mrs. Failing, he also inherits his father's physical strength along with his mother's love of laughter, and thus he survives. Rickie inherits his father's physical weakness along with his mother's understandable fear

of the Elliot-Failing kind of laughter and does not survive. And although Rickie's destruction is the equal responsibility of the characters who laugh too much—the Elliot-Failing family, and the characters who laugh too little—the Pembroke family, the train accident that kills him is the specific fault of Mrs. Failing, who has not taken similar accidents on her property seriously enough. Because the excessive laughers are all members of Rickie's family, while the non-laughers are only members of the family he marries into, the great guilt would appear to reside with the Elliots and the Failings. The characters who see everything as comedy create tragedy, just as Rickie's mother mistakes a cry for laughter and allows Robert to drown. The comic sense is then almost a curse on the Elliots and the Failings, a congenital defect equal to the physical lameness that has also crippled them. "What had they ever done, except say sarcastic things, and limp, and be refined?" (252). Those that marry into the family are also infected.

Laughter is as important in Stephen's story as it is in Rickie's, but for him it is a sign of health, while for Rickie it is a sign of illness. It does get Stephen into trouble: when he makes a sexual joke about Mrs. Failing in front of Agnes, she reports it to the other woman, and uses it to convince Mrs. Failing to disown him. But it is also a sign of his fundamental good nature: when he arrives at Sawston, disowned, to tell Rickie that they are brothers, he greets Agnes "with a pleasant clap of laughter" (237). Agnes tells him that she has had the information for two years, and "his mouth fell open, and he laughed so merrily that it might have given her warning" (239). Then, when he understands that this has been treachery, "the laugh died out of his eyes." And finally it is a sign of redemptive powers: later in the novel, as Rickie returns by train to Cadover for a reconciliation, Stephen dives through the window "convulsed with laughter" and declaring the adventure "the finest joke ever known." He giggles "I'm coming with you," and Rickie, "who had taken to laugh at nonsense again" (282), accepts him. Stephen's laughter is part of Rickie's cure.

While all of this is an obvious replay of the relationship between Philip and Gino in the first novel, there are important differences. Philip is a mocker, and Rickie an object of mockery. Gino is cruel, and Stephen loving. And in the second version the two men come much closer together. Forster further clarifies the relationship between the natural comic man and civilization: Stephen is the spirit of play that can never be destroyed. When he escapes from his bath as a young child and dances naked on the roof at Cadover, Mr. Failing watches. "I see the respectable mansion," he writes. "I see the smug fortress of culture.

The doors are shut. The windows are shut. But on the roof the children go dancing for ever" (130). And Mr. Failing has inherited Cadover, Forster explains, because of the comic muse.

The ending of the novel, however, is a curious affirmation of the ending of the first novel. As Rickie dies at Cadover he admits to his aunt that she has been right in insisting that "we do not live for great passions or for great memories, or for anything great" (295). Before he is hit by the train, he has insisted "we do"; afterward he changes his mind. "You have been right," he tells her (303).

V

The third novel, A Room with a View, the only one of the sequence with a happy ending, is also the only one written in a tone of comic geniality-in place of the extensive mockeries of the first novel and the grim seriousness of the second there is now an ability to laugh without scorn, to take seriously without melodramatic exaggeration. In Where Angels Fear to Tread every character is mocked; in The Longest Journey every situation becomes serious; in A Room with a View the narrative mockery is reserved for the villains of the piece, such as they are: Cecil Vyse and Charlotte Bartlett. Charlotte sits "on a tightly stuffed armchair, which had the colour and contours of a tomato" (7), and Cecil is welcomed into the Honeychurch family by Lucy's mother, who introduces him to the furniture, and by Lucy's brother, who shakes his hand while his own is covered with chemicals. Freddy calls him, not fiancé, but fiasco. But there are really no villains in this version of the story. In The Longest Journey the characters grouped around Rickie and Stephen were either entirely good: Ansell, Rickie's mother, Stephen's father; or entirely bad: Herbert and Agnes Pembroke, Rickie's father, Mrs. Failing. In A Room with a View the characters grouped around Lucy and George Emerson are mixtures of good and bad: the genial and thoroughly likeable Mr. Beebe ends up trying to prevent Lucy from marrying George Emerson; the insensitive and unlikeable Cecil Vyse inadvertently leads George to Lucy; and the prudish and equally unlikeable Charlotte Bartlett leads Lucy to George Emerson. The character types, of course, remain the same, the excessive laughers, the non-laughers, the comic mean between them; and many of the basic elements of the plot formula repeat as well: a sudden death, a carriage ride, a moment of passion. However, while these elements combine to create catastrophe for the principal characters in the first two novels, in A Room with a View the muddle is resolved with only minor emotional

humiliations. Neither Philip Herriton nor Caroline Abbott can maintain a relationship with Gino Carella, especially after his treatment of Lilia, although they are both tempted. Rickie Elliot does establish a relationship with Stephen Wonham, but almost immediately Forster kills him off, and dying, he reaffirms the choices made by Philip and Caroline in their story. But in the third novel, Lucy Honeychurch marries George Emerson, the natural comic man, and thus the first major event of the first novel, Lilia's marriage to Gino, is repeated in the last major event of the last novel. But if Lucy is clearly parallel to Lilia, she is also parallel to Rickie. While Agnes pressures Rickie into denying his own brother, Charlotte pressures Lucy into denying her passionate embrace with George. Both Rickie and Lucy finally reject the direction of their excessively serious and proper advisors, but shortly after he breaks free, Rickie is killed. Lucy, on the other hand, marries George. She can establish an intimate relationship with the natural comic man much more easily than Philip or Rickie could, of course, because she is a woman, and thus the relationship will not be homosexual, but she can also establish such a relationship more easily than Lilia or Caroline-what kills Lilia and warns Caroline off is in Lucy's case no longer such a danger. George Emerson, tied to nature and simplicity much as the likely source of his last name, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and tied to laughter and a sense of humor, much as the likely source of his first name, George Meredith, lacks the selfishness of Carella. In addition, Forster has created the Lucy-George relationship by imposing onto the Lilia-Gino sexual relationship the love of the Rickie-Stephen relationship. The first two novels are combined to create the third.

In other ways this final novel in the sequence is a dialectical synthesis of the earlier two novels. Onto the situation of the first, English tourists who discover passion and truth in Italy, Forster imposes two characteristics of the second, the doubled set of character types and the symbolism of houses that are comic, or serious, or comic and serious in equal measure. While the second novel in the sequence is divided into three parts, the third novel is divided into two—the first part set in Italy, and itself divided between two serious locales, the restrained and proper pensione dominated by English tourists, and the passionate and improper Italian landscape into which the tourists venture at their own peril; the second part set in England and similarly divided between two comic locales, the "witty weariness" of the Vyse house in London (121) and the goodness and hilarity of the Honeychurch country house at Windy Corner. "One might laugh at the

house, but one never shuddered" (175). (These symmetries are reinforced by others throughout the novel: by Lucy's perception of Cecil Vyse as a room without a view, by Cecil's perception of Lucy as a view without a room.) In Italy at the beginning of the novel George is serious and melancholic while Lucy is comic and playful. "Suddenly she laughed; surely one ought to laugh" (27); at Windy Corner in the middle of the novel Lucy is serious and George is the one laughing. "He seems in better spirits. He laughs more," she remarks to Mr. Beebe, who replies "He is waking up" (143). In Italy again at the very end of the novel, and at the same pensione, George laughs again in joy, and Lucy tells him to "stop laughing and being so silly. 'Why shouldn't I laugh?' he asked, pinning her with his elbows, and advancing his face to hers. 'What's there to cry at?' " (205–6).

In Italy they are overcome by passion, by the murder they witness, by two passionate embraces; in England they are first kept apart by Lucy's engagement to the cynical mocker Cecil Vyse, then united by Vyse, through his own love of laughter. "I, even I, have won a great victory for the Comic Muse," Cecil announces to Lucy with great pleasure, having engineered what he believes will be new opportunities for laughter, the move of the Emerson family into the neighborhood at Windy Corner. "George Meredith's right—the cause of Comedy and the cause of Truth are really the same ..." (115). But in spite of his constant mockery. Cecil understands neither comedy nor truth, and the joke rebounds against him-he loses Lucy. Forster's joke however is more complex, for Cecil does advance the cause of comedy and of truth, in spite of himself, and George Meredith is affirmed. At Windy Corner, George Emerson comes under the influence of a more pagan and erotic comic spirit, connected to childhood play, and learns innocent and loving laughter. Then when Lucy discovers that he never revealed their secret embrace in Italy she tells herself "He did not laugh at me when I had gone" (153). Here the absence of the kind of laughter that characterizes Cecil Vyse propels the plot forward, and Lucy begins to fall in love. But Cecil must intervene a second time, once more in the interests of the comic muse. He insists on a reading from the comic novel Under A Loggia (written by another character, Miss Lavish, under the pseudonym Joseph Emery Prank) which details English tourists traveling in Italy. The novel within the novel includes passion, local color, descriptions of Florence, and "some humorous characters" (48), and as Lucy listens to it she bursts out laughing. Then Cecil reads "another much funnier" passage (160), which describes her embrace with George, and the shock of this revelation pushes her into

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an emotional crisis. The ultimate result is her marriage to George at the end of the story. Forster's comic novel about English tourists in Italy depends on another then for the final crisis of the plot, and what that makes possible is the comic ideal: "... music itself dissolved to a whisper through the pine trees, where the song is not distinguishable from the comic song" (136). The novel concludes with loving, playful, and joyful laughter. The first novel in the sequence returns to the first, and at the same time rises above it.

VI

The three novels are full of explicit and implicit references to other texts in the comic tradition, to Austen, Meredith, and James, Aristophanes, and Gilbert and Sullivan, and much Forster criticism has identified his debt to earlier comic writers, primarily Meredith and James. But although such influences are irrefutable, the most important sources for Forster's concepts of laughter and the comic are Aristotle and Sully. What Forster took from Aristotle became a basic structuring device for the novel sequence; what he took from Sully served as a means of elaborating structure into story. In fact, the relationships between Forster's novels about laughter and the comic, and Sully's essay about laughter and the comic, are so extensive that they suggest the young novelist simply decided to turn the established psychologist's essay into fiction. And although it is possible that Sully and Forster came independently upon nearly identical concepts, it is extremely unlikely. They were not commonly held notions, either before Sully or after Forster, and no other writers and critics between 1890 and 1910, even between 1880 and 1920, share these views on laughter and the comic. In Where Angels Fear to Tread we are told that Philip Herriton has read comic theory and taken it as support for his own attitude towards the comic. (Herriton, as others have noted, is modelled on Forster.) And although there are some indications that Forster was influenced by other contemporary theorists, it was on Sully that he elaborated his fictions. "We shall need to insist on the point that laughter is a thing of different tones, some more playful than others," Sully argued, "and that its nature and its function can only be clearly determined by distinguishing these" (153). Sully listed and described a great many tones in his essay on laughter, but he discussed only three in any real detail, the empty laughter of contemporary civilized man, the playful laughter of his hearty peasant ancestor, and the humorous laughter of the rare modern "individual," often a writer, who could

preserve the laughter of the past, and balance the comic with the serious. All of this reappears virtually unchanged in Forster's novel sequence: the effete modern laughters and the playful natural laughters, major preoccupations of the plot, and the humorous individual laughter, what we must take as Forster's apparent goal for himself as writer. About the special perceptions that belong to this kind of humor, Sully wrote, "The distinguishing intellectual element in humorous contemplation is a larger development of that power of grasping things together, and in their relations, which is at the root of all the higher perceptions of the laughable. More particularly, it is a mental habit of projecting things against their backgrounds, of viewing them in their complete settings—so far as this involves those relations of contrariety which, as we have allowed, are of the essence of the ludicrous ..." (300-1). Not only does this statement taken from Sully describe the specific nature of Forster's project in the 1905-1908 novels, but it also anticipates the general nature of Forster's project as a writer, what he would later describe as "only connect."

When Forster began writing these novels, Sully was a preeminent English psychologist, the author of the principal psychology textbooks. He had recently established the British Psychological Society, and had read the first paper before the society-on laughter. His Essay on Laughter, published in 1902, was to be the definitive English text on the subject for a generation—both a psychology of laughter and an aesthetic of the comic, and filled with much conventional wisdom on these subjects, the 340-page essay does make several original points. It is these which Forster followed in meticulous detail, both in the novels of 1905-1908 and in other positions he took towards laughter and the comic. "That the sense of humour should be cultivated with caution" was the subject of a debate at the London Working Men's College Debating Society in 1907. In that debate, Forster argued that "it was pernicious that the sense of humour should be made to direct our lives; it was not capable of performing such a task."5 Sully wrote in 1902 that "we have seen a tendency to claim too much in the way of serious function for the laughter of comedy" (414). In 1927 Forster wrote, "Well, the prophetic aspect demands two qualities: humility and the suspension of the sense of humour" (Aspects of the Novel, 87). Sully wrote in 1902 that "the gift of humour will save a man from many follies, among others that of attempting the office of prophet" (427). He explained: "On the other hand, many worthy people not only do very well without it, but might be at a disadvantage by possessing the endowment. This seems to be true of many excellent men and women

whose special bent is towards a rigorous concentration of thought and moral energy on some mission. . . . Laughter is not for these, we say with half a sigh" (424-5).

In his first three novels, Forster's most important use of Sully is in the opposition of the two comic types, the effete modern laugher and the natural comic man, but his adaptation of Sully's Essay on Laughter extends to smaller aspects of character and plot. In the first scene of the first novel, for example, as Philip is "choking in the fog" (2), Lilia laughs at the crowd of well-wishers. "And laughing helplessly she was carried out into the fog" (3). Forster is here repeating Sully. Describing the stance of a humorist, Sully wrote: "When, glancing back at the crowd wreathing itself in a dust-cloud, he laughs with his large laugh free from rancour, he may catch a glimpse of the absurdity of his critical performances" (410). Later Philip and Gino are brought together as friends during the laughter in the audience at the opera. This too repeats Sully. Laughter, Sully wrote, "is the manna on which good fellowship loves to feed" (423). "The chief value" of laughter "seems to reside in its immediate result, the gladdening and refreshing influence on the laugher, which has in it a virtue at once conciliatory and consolatory" (415).

All three novels depend on Sully's analysis of the relationships between laughter and health. Laughter, Philip Herriton "read and believed, was a sign of good moral health, and he laughed on contentedly . . . "(Angels 55). But Philip is not in good moral health, and his laughter is in fact a sign of the opposite. In Sully's essay laughter is just as often a sign of bad moral health, as of good-what it details at some length are the varieties of comic experience. "With respect to its function as aiding the individual in a healthy self-correction, enough has been said. It is, in truth, no small advantage to be able to blow away some carking care with a good explosion of mirth. And if the world is much with us, we shall be likely to need laughter now and again as a protection from contact with much that is silly and much that is unwholesome" (415). But Sully was not simply an enthusiast of the sort Forster produced in the characterization of Philip Herriton. Philip is a special kind of laugher. Plagued by physical weakness and other more vaguely defined defects—"below the nose and eyes all was confusion"—he relies on "a sense of beauty and a sense of humour, two most desirable gifts" (54). In the novel it is on this sense of humor that he comes to rely, the ability to mock at everything. "A little disenchanted, a little tired" (55), he laughs, and fits Sully's psychological profile of the modern laugher. "The evolutionist has accustomed us to

the idea of the survival of the socially fit, and the elimination of the socially unfit sort of person," Sully wrote. "But more forces are at work in the world than our men of science dream of. There is, oddly enough, a force which favours the survival of the unfit. . . . How many men in one of the highly civilised communities of to-day may have learned to keep their heads above the water by the practice of a gentle laughter, no one knows or will ever know. . . . Some of these, who would probably be called social failures by the faithful adherent to conventional standards, have been known to me. . . . Society's neglect of them, or their neglect of society, has at least permitted them to develop the gift of a wise and entertaining discourse" (408). But wise and entertaining discourse is not all that Philip Herriton produces, and much of the time he is an irritant to family and friends. Sully wrote: "Of the control of laughter as a part of the self-government of a wise man, little need be said. A keen relish for jokes, especially one's own, may entangle the feet even of a kind-hearted man in a mesh of cruel consequences. The witty have been found to be trying to their families, so importunate is the appetite of wit in its demand for regularity of meals" (420).

Such social failures who compensate for their evolutionary weakness by laughter and mockery, and whose jokes entangle even the kind-hearted in a mesh of cruel consequences, appear in each of Forster's first three novels. And while they are, according to Aristotle's schema, all buffoons, excessive laughers who do not know how to control their own senses of the comic, they are also, according to Sully's schema, evolutionary misfits, men who laugh as compensation for weakness. And just as Sully distinguishes between them according to the degree of their laughter, so does Forster. Unlike Philip Herriton (and Freddie Honeychurch), most of these physically weak mockers are not sympathetically presented. Rickie Elliot's father and Cecil Vyse mock the others around them cruelly-emotional cripples, they use laughter to inflict pain on others. Rickie's father is a physically weak pleasure-seeking libertine who laughs and sneers at everything, including his wife and son. Unable to take his family seriously, he abandons wife and child and takes up a vaguely described life of illicit sexuality. Like Mr. Elliott, Cecil Vyse is physically weak, but unlike him, he is fearful of passion. Vyse laughs and sneers at everything he does not understand: the inhabitants of Windy Corner, who seem to him to be provincial stupidities, and Lucy Honeychurch's family. His behavior at dinner with the Honeychurch family is an example. "'May me and Lucy get down from our chairs?' he asked, with scarcely veiled insolence. 'We don't want no dessert'" (141). In the Essay on Laughter, Sully wrote "A yet more sinister characteristic of this later social laughter, reflected more or less clearly even in much of what now passes for comedy, is its cynicism. By this is meant more than the hollowness of the laughter of the world-weary: it implies a readiness to laugh at a new sort of thing, or at least at the old sorts in a new way. . . . The laughter has its readily distinguishable tones: now the thin wiry note of contempt which issues from the superior person, now the rough brazen sound burred by the bolder lips of the roue" (430-1). The rough sound of the roué becomes in Forster's version Mr. Elliot, while the thin wiry note of contempt which issues from the superior person becomes Cecil Vyse. "The laughing impulse, when unchecked, has taken on ugly and deadly forms. . . . " Sully wrote. "Society is right in her intuitive feeling that an unbridled laughter threatens her order and her laws" (418). "There are the duplicities of laughter which may sometimes impose even on one who is in general a kindly laugher, the note of malice stealing in unnoticed," he added (420). Forster illustrated the argument by creating Mr. Beebe, a genteel and kindly laugher for most of A Room with a View, but at the end he actively interferes with Lucy's happiness. It is an abrupt and surprising transition—the note of malice is meant to steal in unnoticed by the reader.

While Aristotle contrasts the individual who laughs too much to the individual who laughs too little, Sully contrasts the socially unfit individual who laughs as defense and compensation to the socially unfit individual who will not laugh at all. "The seriousness of to-day, which looks as if it had come to pay a long visit, may be found to have its roots in the greater pushfulness of men, the fiercer eagerness to move up in the scale of wealth and comfort, together with the temper which this begets, the discontent-'The weariness, the fever, and the fret'-which kill the capacity for a whole-hearted abandonment to simple pleasures" (430) (punctuation modified). Following Sully, Forster created a comparable set of laughter-haters in the 1905-1908 novel sequence, among them Philip's sister Harriet, Rickie's wife Agnes, and Lucy's chaperone Charlotte. Harriet, for example, is pushy and insensitive, eager for middle-class comforts, and discontented. In Italy she suffers from increasing bouts of weariness, fever, and fret, and what she does not have is the capacity for a whole-hearted abandonment to simple pleasures. Forster appears to have used Sully's description of the modern version of the Aristotelian boor as a precise guide in creating the character type. Harriet, Agnes, and Charlotte are not simply agelasts of

the sort described by Aristotle—they are the special sort of modern laughter-haters described by Sully.

For Sully, these new varieties of hypergelasts and agelasts were symptoms of the same significant shift in English civilization: "... the decline of popular mirth is only a part of a larger change, the gradual disappearance of the spirit of play, of a full self-abandonment to the mood of light enjoyment" (428). Before industrialism, Sully argued, the spirit of play was one of the primary characteristics of the civilization; after industrialism, it began to disappear. "It is probably one phase of a whole alteration of temper in the mass of the people. . . . The mirth of Merry England was the outgoing of a people welded in brotherhood.... No such welding pressure has come in these latter days pushing all ranks into a common service of mirth. The sharp classantagonisms of the hour, especially those of employer and employed, leave but little hope of the revival of such a choral laughter of a whole people" (429). "So far as this is the case, what laughter survives may be expected to take on the tone of a forced utterance with something of a sigh of weariness behind it" (430). (The argument anticipates by almost forty years the principal thesis of Bakhtin's Rabelais and His World.) For Sully there was one way out of this historical materialism, a return to the agrarian concept of play. "To be glad with the gaiety of laughter, to throw off the stiff and wearing attitude of seriousness and to abandon oneself to mirth and jollity is, in truth, to begin to play" (145).

All of this is directly appropriated by Forster in the novel sequence, the opposition between the effete modern laugher, who is either an aristocrat or at worst middle class, and the natural comic man, who is always working class and clearly tied to pre-industrial values: Gino Carella, who lives in the timeless Italian past in genteel poverty; Stephen Wonham, who haunts the English countryside as a genteel version of Heathcliff; and George Emerson, the son of an intellectual, who lives simply and without pretensions or much money. All three of these natural comic men are glad with the gaiety of laughter; all three throw off the stiff and wearing attitude of seriousness and abandon themselves to mirth and jollity; all three invite the others to join them and begin to play, and all three have some success; all three are welded in brotherhood to the effete mockers. And within this sequence-Carella, Wonham, Emerson-Forster makes additional distinctions, for these natural comic men are increasingly sensitive, less and less raw and selfish. "It is only when the lively tendency to mirthful utterance is found in a sympathetic nature, side by side with a cultured susceptibility to the pain of giving pain, that an adequate self-regulation may be counted on," Sully wrote (420). "Only where there is a real earnestness and good feeling at bottom, will our laughter be in the full sense that of the mind and the heart" (422). Thus Carella lacks the cultured susceptibility to the pain of giving pain until the very end of his story, while Wonham lacks this quality for the first half of his story, and Emerson only at the very beginning of his. There is one significant difference between Forster and Sully here, for if Sully suggests Marx, Forster suggests Freud. In the novel sequence the political analysis is replaced by a sexual analysis, as Forster makes each of these natural comic men into homoerotic ideals, to whom many of the other male characters are drawn.

At virtually the same time that Freud was arguing in Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious (1905) that the comic was intricately bound up with play and sexuality, Forster was demonstrating a very similar understanding of the subject. Freud's book, frequently used by literary critics looking for a way of explaining comic literature, has become a classic of modern comic theory. Forster's analysis of the comic, perhaps because it is contained within an elaborate form of comic literature, has not. But once we recognize the three novels as a complex sequence of theory and practice, our appreciation of Forster should change dramatically: he is one of the major modern authorities on laughter and the comic. In the process of translating Aristotle's and Sully's theories into fiction, he created theoretical fictions uniquely his own.

¹ Forster, *The Longest Journey* (New York: Vintage Press, 1962); *A Room with a View*, Abinger Edition Vol. 3, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold, 1977); *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Abinger Edition Vol. 1, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold, 1975). Page references in the text of this article are to these editions.

² It may be possible to argue a similar case for three of James' novels, The

American, Washington Square, and Portrait of a Lady.

³ James Sully, An Essay on Laughter, Its Forms, Its Causes, Its Development, and Its Value (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902). Page references in the text of this article are to this edition. One other theorist, Charles C. Everett, appears to have had some influence on Forster, although it is much less substantial. In Poetry, Comedy, and Duty (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1888), Everett, a professor of theology at Harvard, argued that man's existence could be divided between poetry or the sense of the beautiful, comedy or the sense of humor, and duty or serious and practical obligations to others. Such a thesis shows up in Where Angels Fear to Tread, where Philip is guided only by his sense of beauty and his sense of humor, and thereby falls into error—an error that comes because he has an inadequate sense of duty.

⁴ Forster, Aspects of the Novel, Abinger Edition Vol. 12 ed. Oliver Stallybrass

(London: Edward Arnold, 1974), 83.

⁵ P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life, The Growth of the Novelist (1879–1914) (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977), I, 175–76.

The Narrow, Rich Staircase in Forster's Howards End

PAT C. HOY II

Forster's earlier novels, as well as *Howards End*, were shaped by his desire to do for modern England what Arnold and Ruskin had tried to do for Victorian England: deliver her from the repressive forces that were destroying her spirituality, her redemptive power. But *Howards End* is different. Earlier, Forster had advocated the body not the mind as the primary source of redemption; yet his was a cry, not for hedonism but for a radical revision of the terms of Progress in modern culture. Implicit in those earlier novels was his rejection of an "enlightened deliverance" growing out of pure rationalism. He kept reminding his readers that the body as well as the mind knows; he did so by setting passion, intuition, feeling, and vitality above reason, intellect, social respectability, and culture.

In *Howards End* Forster imagines a salvational scheme that is more purely English and in so doing rearranges his priorities, tries to set mind above body. He deprives *Howards End* of the saving power of Italy. The mind and its byproduct, the ideal, are paramount. And even though a "faint image of the lost city [of Venice]" does remain hidden below the novel's surface, it too is transformed into yet another English symbol, a house.¹ Southern passion gives way to Northern idealism. Only Leonard Bast can actually journey into "ancient night," and even he is torn between the primitive experience and the culture that wants to help him account for it. Nevertheless, Leonard's centrality, as well as his helplessness, keeps the novel alive today; he affords a study of contrasts. He is the unsung anti-hero. His marriage, which represents that joining of the "submerged" masses with "the fortunate few," is more central to the novel than the other marriage, the one we continue to talk about.² His marriage too is important as an idea.

inequality were quite clear, as he pointed out to the Royal Institution in February 1878:

[O]ur shortcomings in civilisation are due to our inequality; ... this constitution of things, I say, has the natural and necessary effect, under present circumstances, of materialising our upper class, vulgarising our middle class, and brutalising our lower class. And this is to fail in civilisation. (VIII:299)

This bold suggestion for a radical revision of national values was most assuredly not what his audience wanted to hear.

Forster did not disagree with Arnold's humanistic notions; he too wanted the nation to achieve an inward grace that would resist mechanization, but he was far more practical than Arnold and other nineteenth-century idealists who too easily assumed that their schemes were universally applicable to the nation's problems. When Forster turned in *Howards End* to Arnold's judgment of Sophocles—the judgment that "he saw life steadily and saw it whole"—he did so, I think, with conscious irony. Forster's judgment was that Arnold and other idealists did not project far enough ahead, that they did not see the "modern world" whole, that their ideals were indeed problem-beset. That judgment lies at the heart of *Howards End*, and we can see it reflected years later in "Does Culture Matter?" Forster suggests that culture does matter, but he qualifies his response with Arnold clearly in mind:

What is needed in the cultural Gospel is to let one's light so shine that men's curiosity is aroused, and they ask why Sophocles, Velasquez, Henry James should cause such disproportionate pleasure... Our chief job is to enjoy ourselves and not to lose heart, and to spread culture not because we love our fellow men, but because certain things seem to us unique and priceless, and, as it were, push us out into the world on their service.⁵

There are subtle changes here in the Arnoldian imperatives. It is not by passing on *ideas* but by demonstrating through our lives the numinous and regenerative quality of those ideas that we are likely to inspire others to be more humane and to care about the "best that has been thought and known in the world." The shift is from ideas to the arousal of curiosity about those ideas through inspirational behavior—a shift from abstract ideals to human models. Forster seems to be trying to reshape Arnold's notions so that they will be more palatable to a modern audience; yet he deflates Arnold's lofty ideals without wholly abandoning them.

What then of Leonard Bast and the Schlegels? Do their roles in Howards End reflect Forster's disenchantment with nineteenth-century

Forster tests the ideals of Culture and Equality, which he associates with both Ruskin and Arnold, against the complexities of modern life and, in so doing, exposes the simplicity and inadequacy of those ideals. This examination, focused on Leonard Bast, includes a consideration of the proper use of literature, the impact of Culture and Equality on the lower middle class, and the difficulties that arise when the upper middle class tries to be charitable to the poor. As a counterpoise to the disruptive change and flux that he associates with modernity, Forster projects his own ideal that embraces Mrs. Wilcox, Howards End, the wych-elm, rural agrarianism, and the "inner life"; it also embraces the Schlegels, Henry, and Leonard. Although neither nineteenth-century ideals nor Forster's two fictional marriages survive the test, Leonard's image remains to remind us of the tragic failure of well-intentioned intellectual schemes for salvation, schemes that do not account for the complexity of giving and receiving in the modern world; that lingering image of Leonard also changes our sense of the house-its rightful owner and the source, in Forster's mind, of its numinousness.

Wilfred Stone does not touch on the subject of nineteenth-century influences in *Howards End*. He simply suggests that Arnold's "sweetness and light" is essentially the same as Mr. Schlegel's "light within." However, "sweetness and light" or "beauty and intelligence" are closely linked to Arnold's sense of perfection: "The pursuit of perfection . . . is the pursuit of sweetness and light." It is also the essence of the Arnoldian gospel of Culture, the ideal developed in *Culture and Anarchy* that was to save England from "machinery," greed, and aristocratic indifference:

He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. . . . [Culture] is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light.⁴

The people of the nation must work for "sweetness and light," must make available to *all*, not the "ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party," but the best that culture can offer:

[Culture] seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; . . . This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. (V:113)

In the late 70s Arnold sought even more emphatically to transmit his ideal of equality to the aristocratic and business classes. The effects of

inequality were quite clear, as he pointed out to the Royal Institution in February 1878:

[O]ur shortcomings in civilisation are due to our inequality; ... this constitution of things, I say, has the natural and necessary effect, under present circumstances, of materialising our upper class, vulgarising our middle class, and brutalising our lower class. And this is to fail in civilisation. (VIII:299)

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Forster did not disagree with Arnold's humanistic notions; he too wanted the nation to achieve an inward grace that would resist mechanization, but he was far more practical than Arnold and other nineteenth-century idealists who too easily assumed that their schemes were universally applicable to the nation's problems. When Forster turned in *Howards End* to Arnold's judgment of Sophocles—the judgment that "he saw life steadily and saw it whole"—he did so, I think, with conscious irony. Forster's judgment was that Arnold and other idealists did not project far enough ahead, that they did not see the "modern world" whole, that their ideals were indeed problem-beset. That judgment lies at the heart of *Howards End*, and we can see it reflected years later in "Does Culture Matter?" Forster suggests that culture does matter, but he qualifies his response with Arnold clearly in mind:

What is needed in the cultural Gospel is to let one's *light* so shine that men's *curiosity* is aroused, and they ask why Sophocles, Velasquez, Henry James should cause such disproportionate pleasure. . . . Our chief job is to enjoy ourselves and not to lose heart, and to spread culture not because we love our fellow men, but because certain things seem to us unique and priceless, and, as it were, push us out into the world on their service.⁵

There are subtle changes here in the Arnoldian imperatives. It is not by passing on *ideas* but by demonstrating through our lives the numinous and regenerative quality of those ideas that we are likely to inspire others to be more humane and to care about the "best that has been thought and known in the world." The shift is from ideas to the arousal of curiosity about those ideas through inspirational behavior—a shift from abstract ideals to human models. Forster seems to be trying to reshape Arnold's notions so that they will be more palatable to a modern audience; yet he deflates Arnold's lofty ideals without wholly abandoning them.

What then of Leonard Bast and the Schlegels? Do their roles in Howards End reflect Forster's disenchantment with nineteenth-century

idealism as well as his disenchantment with the state of the English nation between 1908 and 1910? My judgment is that they do. In this novel about the *ideal*, we must to some degree rid ourselves of the expectations that have grown out of the earlier novels where generalized ideals have been little more than codified notions governing English behavior. Forster pauses here to try to see whole a number of conflicting ideals that serve as alternatives for his characters. We get our best sense of those ideals and Forster's judgment about them by examining their impact on Leonard Bast's life. If, as Forster reminds us, "To see life steadily and to see it whole was not for the likes of [Leonard]," we should feel compelled to ask why (52). Our answer will, of necessity, include a further consideration of Ruskin and Arnold, as well as of the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes; all are to some degree culpable for Leonard's premature death of "heart disease."

Forster's rejection of Ruskin is direct and, in a special sense, quite superficial. He does not attack Ruskinian idealism systematically; he simply reacts to that nineteenth-century "clamour for art and literature" that he explicitly associates with Ruskin in this novel, in A Room With a View, and in "Does Culture Matter?" By 1908 Forster sees quite clearly that England and her poor need more than a clamor for art; he has become distrustful of idealistic plans for salvation dreamed up by rich esthetes, and Leonard Bast is the creative proof of his dissatisfaction. Leonard tries to read and listen his way into middle-class culture, tries desperately to climb that "ladder" into what he perceives to be a better life. Subconsciously, he longs to follow the Schlegel sisters "up that narrow, rich staircase at Wickham Place, to some ample room, whither he would never follow them, not if he read for ten hours a day" (52).7

We sense Leonard's plight when he tries to explain to Jacky his motives for reading Ruskin and attending concerts. "Equally indifferent," she is unable even to share his belief in himself as an "Englishman" who never goes "back on his word"—a sentiment that makes him determined not to "leave her in the lurch" even if it means going against family. Forster implies that Leonard has acquired this false nobility from books; Leonard himself makes this connection:

I care a good deal about improving myself by means of Literature and Art, and so getting a wider outlook. For instance, when you came in I was reading Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*. I don't say this to boast, but just to show you the kind of man I am. (51)

He shows no tenderness, only a false sense of his role as protector. He postures. Only at the end of the novel, after his affair with Helen and

the disastrous experiences that follow, do we learn that "He pitied [Jacky] with nobility . . . not the contemptuous pity of a man who sticks to a woman through thick and thin" (315–16). From the beginning, Leonard has no sense of the entrapping nature of culture; he simply pursues it with a vengeance. In a similar way Forster pursues Leonard's culture-hankerings, going out of his way to make Leonard ostentatious and superficial, only to shift the emphasis later to redeem both Leonard and what Leonard is, a yeoman, a man of the earth.

If we look carefully at Forster's use of Ruskin as a literary device. we get a clear sense of his rejection of Ruskinian idealism as well as his adaptation of Ruskin's methods; he transforms the "island church" in Venice into Howards End and Ruskin's language into the language of everyday. Forster obviously shared Ford Madox Ford's conclusion that the "literary Language had grown perfectly unfit for the communication of any kind of daily thought, or indeed for any kind of thought of all."8 Leonard reads from the Torcello chapter of Stones of Venice, Volume II—important in terms of the "island church" (to be considered later) and important too in terms of Leonard. Forster wants us to note the contrast between the "rich man" speaking from the gondola and the relatively poor man listening without fully comprehending in a London flat. The problem is reflected in the style. The "fine sentence" Forster selects from the work seems unsuited for "the needs of daily life"; Leonard cannot modify it so that it is suitable for use in a letter to his brother the lay reader. Ruskin's style is beyond Leonard too. He listens "with reverence" to the voice and wants to undergo a "sudden conversion" to Culture, but there is a problem:

And the voice in the gondola rolled on, piping melodiously of Effort and Self-Sacrifice, full of high purpose, full of beauty, full even of sympathy and the love of men, yet somehow eluding all that was actual and insistent in Leonard's life. For it was the voice of one who had never been dirty or hungry, and had not guessed successfully what dirt and hunger are. (47).

Ruskin is too remote to be of value. Even Leonard's belief in "a steady preparation for the change" will not admit him to the Schlegels' upper room (48). He has no "heritage that may expand gradually," and Forster continually emphasizes the folly of trying to bridge too rapidly the gap created by years of civilizing.

Margaret Schlegel's calling card, which marks Leonard's place in the Ruskin volume and later leads Jacky to Wickham Place, "symbolize[s] the life of culture" for Leonard. Typically, he sees the two Schlegel women as the "denizens of Romance, who must keep to the corner he has assigned them, pictures that must not walk out of their frames" (120). Seeing them as art objects and as grail symbols, he cannot see them as human beings, just as they, for entirely different reasons, have difficulty seeing him as a human being. Like Cecil Vyse, Leonard, although motivated differently, misuses art and literature, and thus separates himself from the greater life around him. Margaret, on occasion, sees around this high culture. On one such occasion, she tells Henry Wilcox that Leonard's "brain is filled with the husks of books, culture-horrible; we want him to wash out his brain and go to the real thing" (142). She reveals her own problem as well as Leonard's. Convinced that she can lead others past "life's daily gray," she eventually helps to ruin Leonard by giving him advice and then by abandoning him after he has lost his job. Of greater significance at this point is the cultural gap between Leonard and the "rich man" in the gondola who inspires him to try to climb the "rich, narrow staircase." Leonard cannot move freely between classes; the distance between him and his guides is so great that neither books nor the intellect nor diligence can deliver this lower middle-class man from cultural bondage.

Leonard would be only a pathetic boob if he simply danced through the pages of this novel in pursuit of culture. But he is not a boob; he is a victim. Ironically, he is one of those people Arnold identifies in Culture and Anarchy who, in a special way, stand outside class: "aliens, if we may so call them, - persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general humane spirit, by the love of human perfection" (V:146). Forster gives Leonard this kind of potential but pits him against the complexities of modernity that work against his humane but naive spirit. He remains compelling because deep down within him there is something fine and genuine, something that wants an outlet. Even his sentimental dedication to the protection of Jacky has something about it that is finer than Henry Wilcox's desire to protect women and finer still than Cecil Vyse's medieval desire to "lead women, though he knew not whither, and protect them, though he knew not against what" (Room 132). Leonard has also the capacity for wonder and does, on one occasion, move beyond the cultural role he tries to play. On this occasion, he goes "off the roads" on a symbolic journey into "ancient night." His motivation comes from his reading but, ultimately, the books merely serve as "signpost sl":

He had visited the county of Surrey when darkness covered its amenities, and its cosy villas had re-entered ancient night. Every twelve hours [sic] this miracle happens, but he had troubled to go

and see for himself. Within his cramped little mind dwelt something that was greater than Jefferies's books—the spirit that led Jefferies to write them; and his dawn, though revealing nothing but monotones, was part of the eternal sunrise that shows George Borrow Stonehenge. (118)

The books show Leonard how to push "back the boundaries," to get outside the stifling influence of Jacky and the basement flat for a brief interlude; he gets "back to the Earth" and his primal origins.

Leonard's walk is not a minor, second-hand cultural "experience," and when he shares it with the Schlegels, they understand perfectly its symbolic importance; they elicit his humane instinct. They also encourage him to narrate that experience directly, free of cultural encumbrances; they want to know the facts independent of the books that inspired him. When he is finally able to say to Helen that the dawn was not wonderful (avoiding romantic overstatement), he gains Forster's approval: "Down toppled all that had seemed ignoble or literary in his talk, down toppled tiresome R.L.S. and the 'love of the earth' and his silk top-hat" (117). Leonard begins to speak "with a flow, an exultation, that he had seldom known." That is the value of his experience, and Forster asks us not to take it lightly:

That the Schlegels had not thought him foolish became a permanent joy. . . . He had hitherto supposed the unknown to be books, literature, clever conversation, culture. One raised oneself by study, and got upsides with the world. But in that quick interchange a new light dawned. (122)

As Leonard goes home he takes off his top-hat, the badge of culture, and walks bareheaded down Regent Street; thus freed, he invites unconscious "hostility" from the few people who pass, until, finally, he dons the hat that is so big it bends his ears down. Looking ridiculous, he "escape[s] criticism." Thus Forster defines the cultural yardsticks but shows us something far more genuine. Leonard momentarily transcends culture because the Schlegels have confirmed his worth. Arnold was right: "the extrication of the best self, the predominance of the humane instinct, will very much depend upon its meeting, or not, with what is fitted to help and elicit it" (V: 146).

But Leonard's problem is that culture also works against him. On a later occasion, when the Schlegels invite him to tea and advise him to "clear out" of his business because it is destined to collapse, he is perplexed and disappointed. Talking about the details of everyday life, they destroy the illusion of Romance he has structured around them, and we are reminded that for him " 'the Miss Schlegels' still remained a

composite Indian god, whose waving arms and contradictory speeches were the product of a single mind" (137). When they try to explain to him the deeper meaning of his entry into "ancient night," he "fail[s] to see the connection" between that experience and his daily life:

"[W]e hoped there would be a connection between last Sunday and other days. What is the good of your stars and trees, your sunrise and the wind, if they do not enter into our daily lives? ... [H]aven't we all to struggle against life's daily grayness, against pettiness, against mechanical cheerfulness, against suspicion?" (140)

But Leonard is suspicious; his class makes him suspicious, and Margaret's speech confuses him.

From the moment we first see Leonard at the Queen's Hall performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, we are aware that he is under some compulsion to "pursue beauty," and we see that his efforts leave him with only fragmented knowledge: "His brain might be full of names, he might even have heard of Monet and Debussy; the trouble was that he could not string them together into a sentence (37). Leonard stands near the "abyss," at the "extreme verge of gentility"—poor but proud and unwilling to "confess any inferiority to the rich." Forster wants us to sense the irony of Leonard's position: he is inferior in a practical sense (he lacks the necessities) and superior in another, more important, sense (he is patronized and victimized by a society that heightens his awareness of class distinctions while teasing him to climb the ladder):

[H]e was inferior to most rich people, there is not the least doubt of it. He was not as courteous as the average rich man, nor as intelligent, nor as healthy, nor as lovable. His mind and his body had been alike underfed, because he was poor, and because he was modern they were always craving better food. (43)

But as that passage progresses, the "angel of Democracy" bears the brunt of the burden for making Leonard "obliged to assert gentility." The civilizing process confounds the problem by heightening the awareness of *inequality*. Forster is not advocating either cultural ignorance or rigid class boundaries; he is simply exposing the too simplistic approach to equality.

Forster shows us quite clearly why "To see life steadily and to see it whole was not for the likes of [Leonard]." And connected with that Arnoldian phrase there is another, hidden, irony. I suspect Forster was aware of it. The phrase was first applied to Sophocles in Arnold's 1849 sonnet "To a Friend" and repeated in the 1857 Inaugural Address

when he outlined his hope for "an intellectual deliverance" through ancient literature, specifically that of Sophocles (I:19–20, 28). Leonard cannot see life as Sophocles saw it, and he is perhaps Forster's fictive evidence that neither could Arnold. The complexities of modern life simply militate against an "intellectual deliverance" of the sort Arnold imagined. It is Forster, of course, who sees life steadily and whole, and the deliverance he suggests in *Howards End* is less intellectual than Arnold's was in 1857. Forster's plan is educational but does not depend on a complex, formal educational system; its target is the imagination of the middle class, and, like Arnold's plan, it seeks to recapture the classical past. But the focus is more narrowly fixed on the English past. That is why the "great mythology" of *Howards End* is so important to Forster.

If we go back to that "fine sentence" from Ruskin that Forster used to underscore the gap between the "rich man" and "the boy, Leonard Bast," we get a clearer sense of Forster's scheme of cultural salvation:

Let us consider a little each of these characters in succession; and first (for of the shafts enough has been said already), what is very peculiar to this church, its luminousness. (47)

Adapting the sentence for Leonard's use results in this initial transformation:

Let us consider a little each of these characters in succession; and first (for of the absence of ventilation enough has been said already), what is very peculiar to this flat, its obscurity. (47)

And then more appropriately, it becomes,

My flat is dark as well as stuffy. (47)

Ruskin is writing about the little "island church" at Torcello, and he is describing its "characters" and its cultural origins:

It has evidently been built by men in flight and distress.... And it is so consistent with all that Christian architecture ought to express in every age (for the actual condition of the exiles who built the cathedral of Torcello is exactly typical of the spiritual condition which every Christian ought to recognize in himself, a state of homelessness on earth, except so far as he can make the Most High his habitation). . . . (20–23)

The notion of "homelessness on earth" in a period of "flight and distress" lies at the heart of *Howards End* and is central to Forster's dramatic presentation of the "flux" of a modern "nomadic civilization." "What is very peculiar to this [island] church—its luminousness" stands in stark contrast to "what is very peculiar to [Leonard's] flat—its obscurity." Church/flat and luminousness/obscurity: what Leonard and

all of the other sensitive people in this novel seek is a real home in the midst of chaotic change, something luminous and permanent. Howards End becomes that sacred place.

Margaret Schlegel recognizes in Leonard's "ancient night" experience the subconscious aim of his journey: "You tried to get away from the fogs that are stifling us all—away past books and houses to the truth. You were looking for a real home" (140). That Leonard never finds his own "real home" is further evidence of the cultural forces working against the yeoman, but the Schlegels find a "permanent home" and Leonard's child occupies it at the end of the novel. Margaret, trying to see through to a new era, observes:

This craze for motion has only set in during the last hundred years. It may be followed by a civilization that won't be a movement, because it will rest on the earth. All the signs are against it now, but I can't help hoping, and very early in the morning in the garden I feel that our house is the future as well as the past. (337)

Howards End is Forster's "island church," designed to capture the "spiritual condition which every [Englishman] ought to recognize in himself"—the spiritual condition, not of homelessness, but of permanence. It represents not a reaching up to the Most High, but a reaching down to the earth, to England. Howards End and the tree represent all the greatness the English past can offer as a stay against the "flux" of modernity. It is an earthbound home, agrarian and stable. Here the sun does shine—a luminescence absent from the Schlegel household the previous thirty years (297)—and in so doing suggests a power and a permanence greater even than Wilcox steadiness and Schlegel wholeness. Places, furniture, and trees endure; they outlast people, and from them, we get our surest sense of the everlasting and the spiritual reality behind the flux.

Mrs. Wilcox's attitude toward the importance of places and Helen's deep sense of the spiritual permanence of invested objects suggest a different if not a totally new sense of priorities for Forster. He was willing to extend his imaginative vision to try to put the English *mind* back on the right track. He was beginning to sense how very difficult it would be to enlighten his nation about the power and the beauty of the body; secular salvation would have to be offered in terms more comprehensible to an English mind out of touch with its primitive instincts. His attempt to capture in furniture and places something more enduring than a human life does not suggest Forster's indifference to the

human condition; on the contrary, it suggests a concern about the impact of evolutionary change on humanity in general. He is not trying to arrest change but to find something permanent and spiritually comforting behind the "eternal formlessness" that he associates with London and the modern condition, and he subordinates the merely personal to the everlasting.

Howards End is especially coherent if we recognize that Forster's primary inquiry is conducted on an abstract level. We have already noted that in the end the inquiry leads to a reaffirmation of the "inner life," but that conclusion must wait until a search for something very different fails. Forster tries first to see beyond the finite boundaries of a single life, beyond even the boundaries of an era. He projects England's destiny through a number of "family" groupings that reflect this evolving spectrum: the romantic idealist (Mr. Schlegel) is succeeded by a romantic idealist (Helen), a pragmatic idealist (Margaret), and an effeminate son (Tibby). Ruth Wilcox is succeeded by her modern, intellectual heir Margaret Schlegel. Miss Avery is succeeded by her niece, a "most finished young person" whose notions of "gentility" conflict with those Forster associates with Hilton and with Howards End (265). Mr. Wilcox is succeeded by Charles who in turn is succeeded by his rabbity brood who "may inherit the earth" (182). Given that spectrum of future possibilities, it should come as no surprise that Helen and Leonard produce England's heir; the impetuous romantic and the boy from yeoman stock certainly offer greater possibilities than the Wilcox brood.

On the more realistic level, the relationship simply will not support the symbolic weight Forster places on it. He seems to sense this because, at the end of the novel, he returns to the abstract level as Helen tries to remember Leonard as her lover and cannot: "I tempted him, and killed him, and it is surely the least I can do. I would like to throw out all my heart to Leonard on such an afternoon as this. But I cannot. It is no good pretending. I am forgetting him" (335). Margaret advises Helen to recognize her own unique differences:

It is part of the battle against sameness. Differences—eternal differences, planted by God in a single family, so that there may always be colour; sorrow perhaps, but colour in the daily gray. Then I can't have you worrying about Leonard. Don't drag in the personal when it will not come. Forget him. (336)

Again we are back to the impersonal, to that level of abstraction that recognizes that there will always be rich and poor, that an "adventure"

for Leonard may be nothing for Helen. Only the house and the "eternal differences" seem changeless. Comfort comes through recognition of those differences.

In Forster's early conception of the novel, Margaret, not Helen, was to have the child. This emphasizes the importance of the symbolic marriage between Margaret and Henry, which was to provide not only a glimpse of the mingling of culture and business but also, perhaps, an heir. By the time Forster actually developed the characters, he had changed his plan. Aware perhaps that the genetically dominant Henry Wilcox had already bred out the finest quality of the Howards, he turned to Helen and Leonard. How appropriate then that within Henry "all had reverted to chaos, ruled so far as it was ruled at all, by an incomplete asceticism" and that Margaret with a "masterly" grip on life is like a "mountain peak, whom all might tread, but whom the snows made nightly virginal" (183, 179). Forster makes the pair sexually barren and offers as one of Margaret's "eternal differences" her inability to love children.

Clearly, the importance of the Schlegel-Wilcox marriage rests solely on the *possibility* of joining the idealist and the business man; it is a marriage that will provide the woman an opportunity to change the man, to make him whole and, therefore, better. In that sense, the marriage is destined to deny Henry his "eternal differences." On a related level, it seems to be a marriage that will produce a better man for England from the *only* man England has left who seems still capable of shaping her destiny. But the marriage fails and in noting the reason for its failure, spoken here by Margaret, we see that Forster turned back to the "inner life" that had served him so well earlier:

You shall see the connection if it kills you, Henry! You have had a mistress—I forgave you. My sister has a lover—you drive her from the house. Do you see the connection? Stupid, hypocritical, cruel—oh, contemptible!—a man who insults his wife when she's alive and cants with her memory when she's dead. A man who ruins a woman for his pleasure, and casts her off to ruin other men. And gives bad financial advice, and then says he is not responsible. These men are you. You can't recognize them, because you cannot connect. (305)

Margaret is not talking about the "rainbow bridge" but about connecting the inner life with the outer. Had Henry been able to make the internal connection between Monk and Beast, perhaps he too could have made the other connection as well. But he did not connect, and in this important passage we review all of the Wilcox "sins," the limitations of the outer life. Broken, and shuffling around Howards End, Henry

does decide finally to give the home to its rightful spiritual heir, but he does not inspire us to believe that he has developed a genuine sense of the "inner life." Nor can Margaret, with Helen as chorus, inspire us to believe that she loves him in other than an idealistic sense. Deciding not to leave Howards End and England, she takes him back out of pity: "She did what seemed easiest . . ." (332). And even if "she did not see that to break him was her only hope," he is broken in the end by Charles's imprisonment and by her expression of disgust over his failure (331). There is certainly no evidence that the "rainbow bridge" has connected the prose and the passion. The beast and the monk are never killed, and the marriage that promised so much is finally subordinated to the novel's other symbols: the house, the wych-elm, the meadow, the child, and the father.

In the end, Leonard Bast is clearly the most emotionally resonant of those symbols. Not only is he of yeoman stock and therefore more entitled by natural rights to Howards End than either Schlegel or Wilcox, he is also able, from his own limited perspective, to connect his inner life with the outer. He goes to Howards End to accept moral responsibility for doing wrong to Helen, never thinking for once that "Helen was to blame." His "remorse" is wrong-headed, but his desire to confess "did not take an ignoble form" (316). Forster would have us understand the "two bright spots" of Leonard's life:

He remained alive, and blessed are those who live, if it is only to a sense of sinfulness.... And the other bright spot was his tenderness for Jacky. He pitied her with nobility now.... (315)

Leonard, who makes connections, has become a sensitive man.

Forster emphasizes Leonard's connection with the primitive past that gives the "island church" and the country their strange power. In the Tewin Woods, through which Leonard must pass, the novel's opposing forces are brought into sharp focus: the legends of the Tewin churchyard and the hermit are linked to Ruth Wilcox and contrasted with the "businessmen, who saw life more steadily, though with the steadiness of the half-closed eye" (320). Those same businessmen are also contrasted with the Hilton farmers, "[h]alf clodhopper, half board-school prig, [who] can still throw back to a nobler stock, and breed yeomen" (320). Finally comes the contrast between yeoman and Imperialist, who "ever in motion, hopes to inherit the earth":

But the Imperialist is not what he thinks or seems. He is a destroyer. He prepares the way for cosmopolitanism, and though his ambitions may be fulfilled, the earth that he inherits will be gray. (320)

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Thus Forster pits the Yeoman Leonard against the Imperialist Henry and links Leonard more solidly with England's primitive past.

The sun that streams over Leonard during his journey to Howards End does not "free" him, but his remorse becomes "beautiful," and by the time he arrives he is optimistic and convinced of an "innate goodness elsewhere." He sees beyond the goblins, even beyond death and his own private "sin":

Again and again must the drums tap and the goblins stalk over the universe before joy can be purged of the superficial. It was rather paradoxical, and arose from his sorrow. Death destroys a man, but the idea of death saves him—that is the best account of it that has yet been given. Squalor and tragedy can beckon to all that is great in us, and strengthen the wings of love. They can beckon; it is not certain that they will, for they are not love's servants. But they can beckon, and the knowledge of this incredible truth comforted him. (321)

Personally and privately triumphant, he enters Howards End to make his formal confession only to be smitten down by the very forces that have "spilt the precious distillation of the years" (146).

As Leonard confesses, Charles Wilcox beats him with the sword. Leonard is hurt "not where it descended, but in the heart," and the Schlegel books-the "ladder" into the cultural aristocracy-fall "over him in a shower" (321). How masterfully Forster delivers his own final thrusts as the yeoman falls victim to the Schlegel sword used so improperly and for such vile ends by the warrior-imperialist who can think of nothing but thrashing Leonard "within an inch of his life." It is even easier in the end to see why England's heir must be the son of this common man who is victimized by the civilizing forces that are shaping his nation's destiny. Somehow, Margaret's words of assurance to Helen about "eternal differences" fail to relieve her sister of culpability in this death. Margaret herself most assuredly, but unwittingly, worked against Leonard by advising him to follow Henry's suggestion to clear out of the Porphyrion and by failing to get work for him after the fateful night at Oniton. The final verdict in this case is appropriately "Manslaughter" (331). The yeoman cannot survive the onslaught of culture and imperialism. Perhaps his son can.

¹ Ruskin's recreation of Venice foreshadows Forster's attempted resurrection of a lost nation. See *The Stones of Venice* in *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. Edward T. Cook and A. D. O. Wedderburn (New York: Longmans, Green, 1904), X, 9.

² See Herbert Howarth, "E. M. Forster and the Contrite Establishment," The Journal of General Education, 17 (1964), 196-206, for Forster's general

concern about two English nations—one "possessed of wealth" and opportu-

nity, the other "submerged" (196).

³ The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 240. P. N. Furbank notes that in early 1910, Forster read a paper on Arnold to the local Literary Society in Weybridge; he drew consolation from a passage in Arnold's letter that found Arnold himself "ripening" from an "inward spring"—not unlike Forster's "inner light." See E. M. Forster: A Life (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977–78), I, 181; rpt. (New York: Harcourt, 1978).

⁴ The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1965), V, 112. Further references to this collected

edition appear within the text.

⁵ Two Cheers for Democracy, Abinger Edition, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, (London, Edward Arnold, 1972), Vol. 3, 104. Emphasis added. Further references within the text and within the notes are from The Abinger Edition of E. M. Forster: Howards End, Vol. 4 (1973), and A Room with a View, Vol. 2 (1979), both ed. Stallybrass.

⁶ In A Room with a View, Forster looks disdainfully on English tourists who are unable to respond to the charm of Italy without Rev. Beebe, Mr. Ruskin, or their Baedekers; the richer response goes to those who experience Italy and her people firsthand (14–28).

⁷ There is a faint reminder here of Forster's uneasiness upon first meeting Henry James at Lamb House during the period in which Forster was writing

the novel (Furbank, I:165).

8 Ford, Portraits From Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 214.

⁹ Stallybrass, ed., *The Manuscripts of 'Howards End'* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), Vol. 4a, 187.

Ambiguous Connections: Leonard Bast's Role in Howards End

MARY PINKERTON

E. M. Forster, in "The Challenge of Our Time" (1946), clarified what he saw as the dilemma of Victorian liberal humanism:

The education I received in those far-off and fantastic days made me soft, and I'm very glad it did, for I have seen plenty of hardness since, and I know it does not even pay. . . . But though the education was humane, it was imperfect, inasmuch as we none of us realized our economic position. In came the nice fat dividends, up rose the lofty thoughts, and we did not realize that all the time we were exploiting the poor of our country and the backward races abroad, and getting bigger profits from our investments than we should. We refused to face the unpalatable truth. . . .

All that has changed in the present century. The dividends have shrunk to decent proportions and have in some cases disappeared. The poor have kicked. The backward races are kicking—and more power to their boots. Which means that life has become less comfortable for the Victorian liberal, and that our outlook, which seems to me admirable, has lost the basis of golden sovereigns upon which it originally rose, and now hangs over the abyss.¹

Perhaps there is no better gloss on the ideas and questions raised and explored in *Howards End*.

Reconciliation is problematic and uncertain, but can best be attempted through personal relations. Forster defines his dilemma: "But in public who shall express the unseen adequately? It is private life that holds out the mirror to infinity; personal intercourse, and that alone that ever hints at a personality beyond our daily vision." The cult of personal relations provides a means of connection. Yet in *Howards End*

Forster's ambiguous treatment of Leonard Bast undercuts his vision. In revising the manuscripts, Forster isolates Leonard from the personal relationships of the novel through his use of pronouns. He treats Leonard with increasing irony and distance, deleting Leonard's interior monologues. At the same time, Forster struggles to develop Leonard as a character, and finally he attempts to raise Leonard to mythic stature by making Margaret's reflections upon his death parallel her thoughts upon the death of Mrs. Wilcox. For these reasons, Forster's treatment of Leonard betrays the precariousness of his vision and anticipates the conclusion of *A Passage to India*.

In the revised Howards End manuscripts one pattern becomes apparent: Forster inserts hundreds of personal pronouns, underscoring in a concrete grammatical way one theme of the novel-the importance of personal relationships. Forster adds pronouns frequently, deletes them less often. Of a total of 794 changes involving pronouns, 601 are insertions, and 193 are deletions. Forster inserts pronouns more than three times as often as he deletes them. The quantity of these changes is not nearly as significant as the qualitative effect they make upon the tone of the published text. The inserted pronouns are most often possessives usually linked with a noun indicating family relationships (my son, my sister, her brother, his son, etc.). Ruth Wilcox and Margaret Schlegel use these constructions most consistently in their own speech. Likewise, these tags are used to identify them. Forster increases pronominal usage to heighten the theme of connection and relatedness in a concrete grammatical way. Shared experience and the importance of personal relationships provide the theme of the novel and consequently dictate certain stylistic choices.

Several examples indicate the care with which Forster thought over his earlier drafts and revised them accordingly. For example, Miss Avery refers to Ruth Wilcox first as "Mrs. Wilcox," then "her old friend Mrs. Wilcox," and then simply "her old friend." Likewise, Forster will sometimes delete a personal pronoun, replace it with a proper name, only to eliminate that in favor of the possessive pronoun and familial tag. For example, Margaret says "It certainly is a funny world but as long as they govern, it'll never be a bad one—never really bad" (MsHE 271:11). In revision "they" becomes "the Wilcoxes" and finally "my husband and his sons" (MsHE 271:11). When Margaret suggests that Paul may still have some feelings for Helen, Mrs. Wilcox replies: "Not that I know of" (MsHE 66:12). With revision, the personal note is added and the response becomes: "Oh no; he often—my Paul is very young; you see" (HE 66:12).

Not only are personal and familial relationships affirmed through the use of pronouns; true ownership of Howards End becomes a focus through Forster's care in inserting and replacing pronouns. When Mrs. Wilcox suggests the excursion to Howards End, for example, she phrases it this way in the manuscripts: "It is in the morning that my house is most itself. I cannot show you the meadow properly except at sunrise" (MsHE 84:10-11). In revision this becomes: "It is in the morning that my house is most beautiful. You are coming to stop. I cannot show you my meadow properly except at sunrise" (HE 84:10-11). And Miss Avery's niece says to Margaret: "Of course Auntie does not generally look after the house" (MsHE 263-24). In revision the last two words become "your place" (HE 294:8). Even more significant are Forster's changes in Margaret's plea to Henry that Helen be allowed to spend one night at Howards End. In the manuscript version, first Foster writes: "She has the idea that one night in the house would give her pleasure and do her good" (MsHE 302:32). In revision Forster changes the house to our house, then that house, and finally your house. The change is enormously significant.

As established as this pattern of pronoun insertion is, Forster departs from the norm in his treatment of Leonard and Jacky Bast. Forster eliminates personal pronouns, and in so doing he conveys their intensified alienation from each other, from other characters in the novel, and from society at large. Of 193 pronoun deletions, 54 refer to Leonard, Jacky, or both. Predictably, Henry and Charles Wilcox are also affected, though less dramatically, by the deletion of pronouns. Here again, statistics are not the whole story, for it is the quality of the text which results from these changes that is striking. Again, selected examples prove to be representative. Instead of describing Leonard greeting "her" (Jacky), Forster revises the passage to read: "greeting the apparition with much spirit, and helping it off with its boa" (MsHE 48:330).

Instead of using personal pronouns to refer to Leonard, he becomes "the boy" (MsHE 52:8), "a nice creature" (MsHE 141:11), "the victim" (MsHE 314:15), "the father" (MsHE 313:5; 328:5), "the missing article" (MsHE 111:33), and "the fellow" (MsHE 188:2). Rather than "her husband," he becomes "the husband" (MsHE 228:12). "His sentimentality" becomes "Romance" (MsHE 120:22). "His face" becomes "the face" (MsHE 122:26). "His commercial training" becomes "a commercial training" (MsHE 137:28); "his letter" becomes "a letter" (MsHE 315:22); and "his brother" becomes "a brother" (MsHE 315:24). Forster also replaces the pronoun with Leonard's proper name (MsHE 309:5,

335:19, 336:7), and he deletes "they" to write "the Basts" (MsHE 307:29, 314:28, 238:22). All of these changes combine to depersonalize Leonard, setting him apart in a grammatical way from the normal relationships of the novel. And with the deletion of personal pronouns, Leonard is distanced and subjected to increased irony by Forster's narrator. To use Forster's words, "Leonard seemed not a man, but a cause" (HE, 309:5-6).

Prior to the death scene, the manuscripts and revisions show Forster struggling to humanize Leonard. In the rejected drafts Leonard is mercenary (MsHE 233:17), obsequious (MsHE 232:26), lying (MsHE 115:4) and incompetent (MsHE 221:38). In the published text, Leonard is a victim of economic and social forces which he is unable to comprehend. He tries to maintain his dignity in the face of few options; he is not be be blamed. At the same time, Forster curtails his use of interior monologue in characterizing Leonard (see especially MsHE 47:29 and the radical reworking of Leonard's thoughts during the aftermath of Oniton [MS p. A6, 7, 8-11], which appears in the published text as the beginning of chapter 41). The manuscripts recount Leonard's thoughts, feelings, and motivation. Forster describes the events of Oniton in a more graphic and emotional manner there than he does in the published text.4 Narrative comment is kept to a minimum and clearly marked. And in the manuscript version, Forster draws a clear parallel between Helen and Jacky (MS p. A8, MsHE 323-324). The cumulative effect of all these changes is to distance the reader from Leonard, to remove references to his thoughts and motivations, and to delete physical details which serve to explain the affair. In the published text, the presentation becomes more abstract, less personal, and more highly ironic in its use of narrative strategy. At the same time Helen is portrayed as thoughtless and "in love with the absolute," and consequently Forster drops the analogy between Helen and Jacky.

This increased narrative distance and heightened ironic tone are consistent with Forster's handling of the prelude to their affair. In the coffee room of the Shropshire hotel, Helen addresses Leonard with condescension. She snaps at Leonard and cuts him off, quite aware that she is snubbing him. Forster writes: "Once or twice during the day she had encouraged him to criticize, and then had pulled him up short. Was she afraid of him presuming? If so, it was disgusting of her" (HE 232). In the dialogue which follows, Forster pinpoints the lack of understanding and communication possible between Helen and Leonard.

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE

Since his initial interview with the Schlegel sisters, Leonard has changed. He no longer hungers for literary discussion, nor does he seek adventure by nighttime walks in the woods.

"Walking is well enough when a man's in work," he answered. "Oh, I did talk a lot of nonsense once, but there's nothing like a bailiff in the house to drive it out of you. When I saw him fingering my Ruskins and Stevensons, I seemed to see life straight real, and it isn't a pretty sight. My books are back again, thanks to you, but they'll never be the same to me again, and I shan't ever again think night in the woods so wonderful" (HE 235).

Nor does Leonard harbor any illusions about Jacky. Leonard has become more pragmatic, realizing that he must secure a job and an income before he can again think about pursuing ideals. So Helen's impassioned speech on the struggle between death and money dramatizes their differences. Cruel circumstance has changed Leonard from a dreamy ineffective romantic into a more pragmatic materialist. Forster writes:

Leonard looked at her wondering, and had the sense of great things sweeping out of the shrouded night. But he could not receive them, because his heart was still full of little things. As the lost umbrella had spoilt the concert at Queen's Hall, so the lost situation was obscuring the diviner harmonies now. Death, Life, and Materialism were fine words, but would Mr. Wilcox take him on as a clerk? (HE 236)

Leonard feels his own stupidity while Helen sees the paradox of Death with increasing clarity. Her plea rises in a dramatic crescendo: "'So never give in,' continued the girl, and restated again and again the vague yet convincing plea that the Invisible lodges against the Visible. Her excitement grew as she tried to cut the rope that fastened Leonard to the earth. Woven of bitter experience it resisted her" (HE 236).

Ironically this provides the only information leading up to the liaison between Helen and Leonard. Their positions are counterpointed to a degree which precludes communication, so it is not surprising that Katherine Mansfield could remark: "And I can never be perfectly certain whether Helen was got with child by Leonard Bast or by his fatal forgotten umbrella. All things considered, I think it must have been the umbrella." It is important to note, however, that Helen is seen as extreme, and in her obsession with absolutes and the "unseen," she is as limited as Leonard is by his narrow vision of material possibilities. The gap between them is poignant, and clearly Leonard is more aware of it.

When Leonard recollects the events of Oniton during its aftermath, Forster downplays "realistic" motivation as well as physical detail as he revises. Instead of beginning with the following morning, Forster separates the events of chapter 41 from Oniton by weeks and months. Instead of emphasizing passion, Forster stresses "remorse." Leonard suffers for his actions, but his suffering is presented with great narrative distance, ambivalence, and irony. The published text is ambiguous about which party had been the sexual aggressor, who was to blame (HE 314).

By deleting physical description and developing Leonard's suffering, which is based upon misperceptions, Forster prepares for the events that follow. Leonard's disorientation, described in the chapter opening, anticipates his hallucinations the night before he sets out for Howards End. Only by describing Leonard's intense self-leathing does his desire to meet Margaret and confess become credible. The distanced perspective and the irony, though they contribute to the ironic outcome, do make it difficult to sympathize with Leonard. Leonard must be woebegone and filled with remorse if he is to find his way to Margaret at Howards End in order to speak the truth and beg forgiveness; in revising this section, however, presentation of Leonard's subjectivity and humanity are sacrificed to the demands of the plot.

However, Forster's revisions do indicate some attempt to establish Leonard as a believable character. Instead of detailing Leonard's search for employment and the singularity of his feelings for Helen, the published text presents his strength of character unequivocally. In addition to his newly acquired tenderness for Jacky, which was also developed in the rejected draft, Leonard is presented as "alive" and unmuddled. Leonard grows as a character in these few pages of the published text. He is able to rise above his circumstances in a manner that would have been beyond the character presented in the draft version. There we are given a continuation of his earlier characterization: he is irritable for lack of money (MS p. A9, MsHE 324) and once "his stomach was filled" he "was again touched by the world's exasperating beauty" (MS p. A9, MsHE 325). Page A10 of the draft shows Leonard brooding upon the sea, home of Romance, still aspiring to walks and excursions with the fishermen (MsHE 325). Instead of dwelling upon Leonard as an ineffectual romantic, the published text presents him as an active agent of his fate.

The development of Leonard's character in the published text moves beyond these naive aspirations. Leonard is disillusioned. He goes to St. Paul's "partly to avoid the rain and partly to see a picture that had educated him in former years." Of this experience, we are told: "But the light was bad, the picture ill-placed, and Time and Judgement were inside him now" (HE, 316). The following sentence in the manuscripts is: "Death alone, with her poppies, still charmed him—Death contending with (Mammon) Money/ for the soul of man, and her lap on which all the generations of men shall sleep" (MsHE 316:18). With revision this becomes: "Death alone still charmed him, with her lap of poppies on which all men shall sleep" (HE, 316:18). This sentence clearly indicates that Leonard has changed since his discussion at Oniton where all that concerned him was money. Though his family has answered his begging pleas for money, the "blackmail" has created ill will and hatred on both sides.

The emphasis upon death at this point picks up the theme of Helen's impassioned speech and prepares for further development of the plot. But equally important, these many changes make Leonard a character of greater strength and substance. The details that present him as a pitiful victim or a romantic fool have been eliminated. Instead, Leonard is presented as disillusioned, but resigned and admirable. As Forster puts it, "Leonard was driven straight through its torments and emerged pure, but enfeebled—a better man, who would never lose control of himself again, but also a smaller man, who had less to control" (HE 313).

Leonard no longer has illusions about himself or his life, and he moves toward his end almost fatalistically. Forster says: "He did not suppose that the confession would bring him happiness. It was rather that he yearned to get clear of the tangle. So does the suicide yearn" (HĒ 316). Leonard now yearns for the absolute. Ironically, his acceptance of his own fallibility has led him to a "conviction of absolute goodness elsewhere." He understands Helen's idea "Death destroys a man, but the idea of death saves him." Forster describes Leonard's state: "As he approached the house all thought stopped. Contradictory notions stood side by side in his mind. He was terrified but happy, ashamed, but had done no sin. He knew the confession: 'Mrs. Wilcox, I have done wrong,' but sunrise had robbed its meaning, and he felt rather on a supreme adventure" (HE 321).

Leonard's openness to the absolute and his acceptance of contradictions may help to explain the depersonalization which asserts itself again in the description of his death. Forster attempts to give Leonard's actions archetypal significance. As he enters Howards End, Forster writes, "He entered a garden, steadied himself against a motorcar that he found in it, found a door open and entered a house" (HE

321). In the manuscript version, 'Leonard's actions are more particularized by Forster's choice of article: "He entered *the* garden, steadied himself against a motor-car that he found in it, found *the* door open and entered *the* house" (MsHE 321:17–18). In the manuscript version, Forster first struggles to capture the experience from Leonard's point of view:

It did not hurt him where it struck him, but in the heart, which was odd. Down fell a book case. Nothing had sense. Faces bent over him—Margaret's, Helen's(—Margaret's nodded, and he died), an old woman's, the faces of all women . . . [or rather three short dashes (Stallybrass's italics)] He was fainting (MsHE 321:27).

This peculiar, inconsistent use of point of view with its abrupt shift from Leonard's interior monologue to the narrator's comment is excised through revision, leaving the description more dignified and less sentimental: "It hurt him, not where it descended, but in the heart. Books fell over him in a shower. Nothing had sense" (HE 321:27). Peter Widdowson has also noticed the archetypal quality of this scene, many of the details of which are later explained in realistic terms. The published text treats Leonard's death with greater narrative distance, paralleling the effect of those changes at the chapter opening.

In the "baptism" scene which follows, the manuscripts avoided the use of personal pronouns in reference to Leonard, creating an icyness and objectivity which seem singularly inappropriate: "They laid the corpse on the gravel, and Helen poured water over it" (MsHE 321:33). Although this would have been consistent with Forster's treatment of Leonard elsewhere, Forster may have recognized his own lack of feeling here, so the passage is changed to read: "They laid Leonard, who was dead, on the gravel; Helen poured water over him" (HE 321:33–34). Or, perhaps it is only at his death that Leonard is most a "person," since Death is an ally of the personal.

Forster's strategy in handling this episode marks this as a moment where the novel expands. Forster succeeds in eliminating Leonard, for as Widdowson points out, "Leonard has to die to clear the way for his son to be 'Liberal England's' heir untrammelled by the drab reality of his father's life and class; Leonard himself would not fit into 'Howards End/England' but the child brought up in the right environment will.' And Helen could not credibly 'have married a Bast.' "8 But Leonard's death does not give closure to the novel; it is not a moment of completion.

Margaret's subsequent meditation upon Leonard's death draws clear connections between his death and Ruth Wilcox's by incorporat-

ing the same symbols, language, and antithetical structures to arrive at a comparable conclusion. One of the most carefully structured passages in the novel is Margaret's reflection upon Mrs. Wilcox's death which pairs nouns, phrases, clauses, and sentences to convey the sense of extremes which Mrs. Wilcox has managed to reconcile with her death. Aside from the opening and one short centrally located sentence which was inserted in revision ("She had kept proportion"), every sentence is antithetical in some way. Forster removes the literal introduction of the manuscripts, tightens oppositions through revision, and inserts the telling pronouns so that the passage in the published text reads:

She was parting from these Wilcoxes for the second time. Paul and his mother, ripple and great wave, had flowed into her life and ebbed out of it for ever. The ripple had left no traces behind; the wave had strewn at her feet fragments torn from the unknown. A curious seeker, she stood for a while at the verge of the sea that tells so little, but tells a little, and watched the outgoing of this last tremendous tide. Her friend had vanished in agony, but not, she believed, in degradation. Her withdrawal had hinted at other things besides disease and pain. Some leave our life with tears, others with an insane frigidity: Mrs. Wilcox had taken the middle course, which only rarer natures can pursue. She had kept proportion. She had told a little of her grim secret to her friends, but not too much; she had shut up her heart—almost, but not entirely. It is thus, if there is any rule, that we ought to die-neither as victim nor as fanatic, but as the seafarer who can greet with an equal eye the deep that he is entering, and the shore that he must leave (HE 100).

And the passage concludes optimistically:

The death of Mrs. Wilcox had helped her in her work. She saw a little more clearly than hitherto what a human being is, and to what he may aspire. Truer relationships gleamed. Perhaps the last word would be hope—hope even on this side of the grave (HE 101).

With that comment, Margaret turns her energies toward the survivors.

After Leonard's death, Margaret has a parallel moment of reflection which recalls through its imagery Ruth Wilcox's death, and through its unreasonable paradox the ambiguity of Leonard's final moments:

Events succeeded in a logical, yet senseless, train. People lost their humanity, and took values as arbitrary as those in a pack of playing-cards. It was natural that Henry should do this and cause Helen to do that, and then think her wrong for doing it; natural that she herself should think him wrong; natural that Leonard should want to know how Helen was, and come, and Charles be angry with him for coming—natural, but

unreal. In this jangle of causes and effects what had become of their true selves? Here Leonard lay dead in the garden, from natural causes; yet life was a deep, deep river, death a blue sky, life was a house, death a wisp of hay, a flower, a tower, life and death were anything and everything, except this ordered insanity, where the king takes the queen, and the ace the king. Ah, no; there was beauty and adventure behind, such as the man at her feet had yearned for; there was hope this side of the grave; there were truer relationships beyond the limits that fetter us now. As a prisoner looks up and sees stars beckoning, so she, from the turmoil and horror of those days, caught glimpses of the diviner wheels (HE 327).

This passage also echoes Margaret's reflections upon the tree and the house: "Their message was not of eternity, but of hope on this side of the grave. As she stood in the one, gazing at the other, truer relationships had gleamed" (HE 203).

Forster carefully works to integrate Leonard's death imagistically, thematically, and structurally into the novel through the parallel between Leonard and Mrs. Wilcox. But, Leonard's death is not grounded in a web of relationships with people or place. In Mrs. Wilcox's death, Margaret gains a vision of proportion, of mediation. With Leonard's death, she grasps a contradiction: his death was "natural, but unreal." In spite of Forster's efforts to elevate Leonard to mythic stature, he is undercut by his own assumptions and his strategy of revision. Connection can come only through personal relationships of which Leonard has been deprived as the pronoun changes indicate. At the same time, Forster treats Leonard with greater irony and narrative distance as the novel evolves. Both of these strategies create an undercurrent which makes Margaret's moment of vision upon Leonard's death precarious at best. And later in the novel, Margaret remarks to Helen: "Then I can't have you worrying about Leonard. Don't drag in the personal when it will not come. Forget him." The ensuing interchange between the sisters provides the final comment on Leonard. Helen asks,

"Yes, yes, but what has Leonard got out of life?"

"Perhaps an adventure."

"Is that enough?"

"Not for us. But for him." (HE 336)

This final condescension and the refusal to make Leonard a protective genie or an agent of the unseen raises the question of Forster's class consciousness and points to the problematic role of Leonard in the novel. Forster's treatment of Leonard provides an important example of an attempt to combine visionary and realistic elements in a single novel.¹⁰

¹ E. M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1951), pp. 56–57.

² E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Abinger Edition Vol. 4. (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 79. Subsequent references to the novel

will appear as internal citations (HE). My italics.

³ E. M. Forster, *The Manuscripts of Howards End*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Abinger Edition Vol. 4A. (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 16. Subsequent references to the manuscripts will appear as internal citations (*MsHE*). My italics.

⁴ J. H. Stape, "'Leonard's Fatal Forgotten Umbrella': Sex and the Manuscript Revisions of *Howards End*," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 9 (1981–82), 124.

⁵ Katherine Mansfield, Journal (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1954), p. 121. Curiously enough, John Middleton Murry deleted this irreverent comment from the earlier edition (1927), and it has not been restored in the most recent American edition (New York: The Ecco Press, 1983). Other critics have found fault with this turn in plot development. Samuel Hynes, for example, says "Howards End is the weak novel it is because it has heterosexual relationships at its centre—an engagement, a marriage, and a fornication move the plot—and Forster could not handle any of them convincingly. And so the events that should be fully treated are either shuffled off-stage or are brought on so wrapped in rhetoric as to be quite meaningless (all that stuff about 'rainbow bridges,' for instance)." See Hynes, "Forster's Cramp," in Edwardian Occasions (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 117. John Stape has discussed Forster's revisions of this episode particularly as it is recalled later in the novel, first in Helen's words, and later through Leonard's recorded thoughts and feelings. Stape argues that Forster's initial descriptions were presented with sufficient psychological and physical detail for the time. He dismisses Hynes' hypothesis that Forster was limited by his homosexuality in his presentation of heterosexual relations. Instead, Stape suggests that Forster adopted a more cautious treatment particularly of the Leonard-Helen incident because of his sensitivity to the reading public. See J. H. Stape, note 4 above. See also Forster's concern over the incident as expressed in a letter to his publisher and a diary entry quoted by Oliver Stallybrass, "Editor's Introduction," Howards End. Abinger Edition Vol. 4. (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), xiii.

6 Stape, 123-32.

⁷ Peter Widdowson, E. M. Forster's Howards End: Fiction as History (London: Sussex University Press, 1977), 104.

8 Widdowson, 104.

⁹ John Russell, Style in Modern British Fiction: Studies in Joyce, Lawrence, Forster, Lewis, and Green (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press,

1978), p. 102.

¹⁰ My understanding of visionary and prophetic elements in modern fiction has been greatly clarified and influenced by Dan Schwarz of Cornell University who directed an NEH summer seminar "Critical Perspectives on the Early 20th Century British Novel" during the summer of 1984, in which I was a participant.

Howards End: Beethoven's Fifth

ANDREA K. WEATHERHEAD

"What a literary man wants to say, though, is that the first kind of rhythm, the diddidy dum, can be found in certain novels and may give them beauty. And the other rhythm, the difficult one—the rhythm of the Fifth Symphony as a whole—I cannot quote you any parallels for that in fiction, yet it may be present."

Aspects of the Novel (p. 113)

As E. M. Forster develops his fiction from "fantasy" to what he calls "prophecy," he substitutes the music of Beethoven for his early use of Pan as a symbol for human passion. In his first story, "The Story of a Panic," he depends upon the mythical god to arouse and to symbolize a young boy's emerging sexuality; much later, in *Howards End*, he uses Beethoven's music to achieve a similar end. In the short story we hear the primitive music of Pan in the reactions of the boy to his meeting with the god; in the novel we encounter Pan in the midst of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony when Helen Schlegel responds to a disturbing spirit in the music with the phrase "panic and emptiness." The spirit of Pan and that of music play complementary roles throughout Forster's fiction; this article demonstrates the culmination in *Howards End* of that development from Pan to Beethoven.

To Forster, fantasy belongs to the limited devices of the "lower air," the lesser divinities," and the "Pans and puns" of parody.² "Phrophecy," on the other hand, transcends the limits of fantasy, featuring not gods but ordinary humans and their situations. And while we cannot seriously believe the god Pan visits a tourists' picnic, we can respect the passion associated with the god Pan that Helen discovers within herself. Because, as Forster says, "prophecy turns its face toward unity," whereas "fantasy glances about," prophecy is a superior fiction for expressing his dreams of social harmony and unity. Pan symbolizes only one part

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of the human experience—primal energy; music, on the other hand, contains this and the element of order necessary for society. Forster eventually drops fantasy and its mythical actors, but he retains the mythical spirit and injects it into symbols more viable and less anachronistic than gods. Hence, in *Howards End*, Pan's spirit, rather than the actual god himself, haunts the accessible realms of Beethoven's music to symbolize awakening passion in the characters.

Forster valued music because it balances spirit and structure, and in his critical writings he wavers between reasons for his high opinion of it. Sometimes he held that it was the form of the music that was significant (as Roger Fry believed); at other times he seemed to want to attribute its power to something that reminded him of something else, or even to something ineffable, almost mystical.⁴ Both the formal and impressionistic aspects of the art appealed to him. He called them respectively "music itself" and "music that reminds," and he placed music the deepest of the arts because the two elements coexist so beautifully. Since he is concerned not only with passion, but with integrating passion into social structure, music's dual nature is for him a model superior to Pan's wild disorderly spirit.

In the myths, Pan traditionally abhors social structure because society hides or discourages the instinctive knowledge of the earth, for which he stands. Hence in Forster's fiction his appearance breaks down rather than enhances social harmony. In the fantasy "The Story of a Panic," Pan's relentless energy collides with society and makes us "glance about" for resolution. By the time of *Howards End*, Forster's musical symbolism lends the tone of unity that is critically important to the "voice" of prophecy.

Pan is related to music in the myth in which Pan chases after the nymph Syrinx to gratify his sexual craving. She escapes him by changing herself into a reed. Pan tries to catch her still, only to grasp a bundle of river reeds. Frustrated at his loss, he invents a musical instrument of reeds, the only objects derived from his lusty chase. The pipes and the name Syrinx are an intellectual substitute for his frustrated sexual energies. He plays on them lustily from the pit of his being, music in the myth being both a physical and an intellectual substitute for actual sex. In Forster, as in the myth, music often displaces the physical expression of sexual desires while at the same time it inspires and awakens the sexual self. Passionate "music that reminds" largely predominates as symbolism in the psychological development of main characters in the novels; and in *Howards End* Forster adopts "music itself" (musical structure) for the structure of his prose. He

ultimately uses the two aspects of music, both that which relates to Pan's passion and that which relates to civilized structure, to make *Howards End* exude the essence of "prophecy," the sensation of a song or of sound."⁷

In Where Angels Fear to Tread music inspires and is the symbol of the sensitivity to human compassion in Philip Herriton and Caroline Abbott. Like Pan, music stirs the primitive passions, but it also encourages social relationships. And while he uses music to accomplish what Pan had achieved, Forster goes further and uses it also as a symbol of order. Music thus absorbs Pan's ability to encourage men and women to relate to nature and to sex, and like Pan it frightens those who are steeped in conventional mores.

References to music in *The Longest Journey* help to crystallize the characterization of Rickie Elliot and Stephen Wonham. At the same time, the structural harmonies of Richard Strauss and of the four-part fugue represent the orderly quality of public schools, and the balance of order and passions in works by Beethoven and Wagner represent Cambridge—Forster's ideal embodiment of social unity. Natural song represents heartfelt passion and instinctive relation to the earth. In this novel, Stephen, not Rickie, feels Pan's spirit, although ironically it is the latter who uses the name Pan for his stories. Rickie recognizes that the power of music is closer than his writing to the passion he is intent upon capturing. But it is Stephen who sings and blows notes through a blade of grass, an instrument like Pan's Syrinx, while Rickie invents imaginary symphonies.

In A Room with a View, Forster mentions Pan only once, in conjunction with the first incidence of physical love in the novel, George's and Lucy's kiss. But Lucy, rather than taking inspiration from Pan, expresses her sexual passion by playing Beethoven. On the occasion of the kiss, the Pan reference is for George; Lucy's abstract mental processes are symbolized by music. The novel shows how music influences Lucy's spirit, different composers illustrating the various degrees of passion or repression. In oppressive situations she declines to play Beethoven, which would threaten her social composure. After the occasion of the kiss, for example, back at the pensione, she so declines, not only in order to preserve her equanimity but also because of Beethoven's music: on the one hand, passion is too suggestive; on the other, the order is too confining.

This novel comes closer than the others to the culmination of Forster's use of music, inasmuch as ordered repetition of certain images and phrases—violets, music, Italy, England—and the sequence of

scenes present a kind of sonata form. For example, George and Lucy in Italy constitute the introduction; Lucy, George, and Cecil in England, the variation; and George and Lucy again in Italy, the recapitulation. The form is a good deal clearer in *Howards End*; but, in this early novel, one can see the beginnings of a sophisticated and musical treatment of leitmotif and rhythm.

Howards End is the culmination of the development of Forster's symbolism from Pan to Beethoven. Though he drops Pan when he says "Of Pan and the elemental forces, the public has heard a little too much—they seem Victorian," the god's spirit is still present in the sexuality of the novel and in Beethoven's music, where he is a kind of illicit presence. He is apparent in Helen's phrase "panic and emptiness," a phrase that she invents to express her sexually passionate and anxious reaction to Paul Wilcox during her visit at Howards End and uses again in response to a disturbing spirit in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Thus, with Helen's identical reaction to both occasions, Forster joins Pan's primitive sexual energy with Beethoven's music.

In addition, he creates a sophisticated rhythm when he repeats the phrase "panic and emptiness" throughout the novel. With each repetition, the phrase takes on a different contextual meaning, and linking the phrases into a whole creates a musical structure, specifically, that of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. In *Aspects of the Novel* Forster talks about music and fiction and how a writer can use rhythm:

Music, though it does not employ human beings, though it is governed by intricate laws, nevertheless does offer in its final expression a type of beauty which fiction might achieve in its own way. Expansion. That is the idea the novelist must cling to. Not completion. Not rounding off but opening out. When the symphony is over we feel that the notes and tunes composing it have been liberated, they have found in the rhythm of the whole their individual freedom.⁹

Just as we can follow Beethoven's passionate rhythm, "diddity-dum," as it repeats and varies into complex phrases in his Fifth Symphony, so can we trace Helen's phrase "panic and emptiness" through Howards End and watch Forster vary and develop it until, as Wilfred Stone points out, 10 it becomes the phrase "Death destroys a man but the idea of death saves him." Forster creates what he calls "expansion," an opening out of meaning. That is to say, he ends with Helen scrutinizing a universal element of human experience, death; but he builds up, to that in her personal idiosyncratic reaction, "panic and emptiness." Howards End ascends from being a novel about one girl's

sexual experience to being a novel about humanity's social experience. When Forster replaces "panic and emptiness" with "Death destroys," fantasy gives way to prophecy, and the suspension of the sense of humor is final.

In the same way that the structure of the symphony is based primarily upon Beethoven's opening rhythm "diddity-dum," the structure of Howards End is based on Helen's phrase "panic and emptiness." One may object that Howards End is about a lot more than Helen Schlegel's passionate reactions. It is, and so is Beethoven's symphony "about" a lot more than his simple opening passionate motto. Forster uses Helen's erratic personality to activate the story. Her visit to the Wilcoxes initiates the friendship and the tensions between the two families: her careless theft of Leonard Bast's umbrella during her passionate exit from the symphony begins the Bast-Schlegel relationship; she invites Leonard to her tea party at which Wilcox is first enamored of Margaret; when she brings the Basts to Oniton she once again intensifies the plot; and even when she is absent she dominates the activity of those at home who wonder about her and search for her in vain. One could continue the list right up to the conclusion of the novel where her pregnancy out of wedlock drives sympathetic Margaret to rebel against Henry at Howards End and motivates Charles to beat up Leonard. Finally it is she who provides the happy child, a result of illicit sex, to inherit Howards End. The point is clear: we can associate Helen's sexual activity with all the main incidents in the novel.

Since Helen's sexual career is the chief catalyst for the story, and since she says Beethoven's Fifth Symphony "sums up her career" (p. 32), it might be enlightening to compare the novel to the symphony. The first rhythmic phrase of the novel, "panic and emptiness," a phrase associated only with Helen's emotional experiences, we can relate to Beethoven's opening phrase. We can follow Helen's phrase as we follow Beethoven's to learn more about the structural beauty of the work.

In the subtle allusion to the god Pan in the images that come to Helen as she listens to the Fifth Symphony at the concert, Forster suggests the connection between sexuality and music, important because it justifies the assumption that "panic and emptiness" rather than any of the other repeated phrases refers to the musical structure of the novel. We may note particularly how Pan relates to the music as it is presented in the symphony scene of Chapter Five.

Of course one cannot prove that Forster would go to the trouble of emulating the structure of the symphony. Many of my observations draw upon impressionist evidence from the novel. We have seen in his earlier novels, however, the importance of music, which appears also in his criticism of other authors:

... the language and images of music appear frequently, often in the context of praise for some formal accomplishment. For instance, he compliments Proust for his use of Vinteuil's phrase as a literary as well as musical structuring device. Virginia Woolf's biography of Roger Fry is ordered like a "musical composition", and *To The Lighthouse* is "a novel in sonata form". In "Ibsen The Romantic", Forster wrote: "with Ibsen as with Beethoven, the beauty comes not from the tunes, but from the way they are used and worked into the joints of the action.¹¹

Forster was a serious amateur pianist and "wanted to play Romantic Beethoven Sonatas in order to capture their 'architecture'." He used to translate music into images. The manuscript of his analysis of Beethoven's piano sonatas at King's College Library is full of literary or metaphorical translations:

The last bars of one piece are called a little smile which irradiates backwards over the rest. In another, the arpeggios, we are told, rush up and down like brooms until any sense of continuity is swept away. Then the brooms are put away and their swing is lost. In yet another piece, a fish swims against the D Minor stream. The next key loses the fish. In other words, where one expects formal analysis of the sonatas, since this is what Forster, inspired by Mauron, set out to do, one finds instead impressionistic description, suggestive images. Here even the narrative impulse of Forster the novelist is called into play by the music. The frequently repeated adjective, "ravishing", takes its full meaning as he notes a series of bars in a piece in which lusciousness is unexpectedly "raped". We are told to contrast this to a very different rape at the end of the first movement of the Appassionata which Forster feels had been planned from the opening bar. This one is a thorough and thoroughly "serious" act of sex. 12

In the music of the Fifth Symphony, a motto-like figure starts the first movement. It is almost more of a rhythm for tapping than a melody; and it varies ever so slightly, its unresolved form giving the feeling of a repeatedly unanswered question. In the pathos of the C minor key, this motto permeates the first movement sometimes as a roar, sometimes as a throb, and sometimes as a whisper. The first movement is intensely emotional and the primitive "diddity-dum" rhythm is of central importance.

In the first "movement" of Howards End Helen introduces the first

motto of the novel, "panic and emptiness." She blurts out the phrase when she describes to Margaret the confusion of the morning after Paul kissed her. The phrase symbolizes one of the main themes of the novel, the conflict of the "inner" versus the "outer" life, in which Schlegels and Wilcoxes collide, a theme intimately associated with Helen's complicated sexual relations. Forster says of Helen's experience with Paul at Howards End, "We do not admit that by collisions of this trivial sort the doors of heaven may be shaken open" (p. 23). We note that this phrase resembles the phrase "Fate knocking on the door," which Beethoven labelled *his* opening rhythm.¹³

The first movement, or exposition, is the initial statement of themes to be developed and recapitulated there. Occasionally some of these may recur in subsequent movements. Beethoven's unresolved motto launches us into the first passionate emotion of the Fifth Symphony. With Helen's phrase "panic and emptiness" Forster launches us into the first conflict of Wilcoxes versus Schlegels. Variations on the initial rhythm in the first movement of the symphony expose in more detail what is to follow. In Forster's first twelve chapters, the first third of the novel, he exposes the thematic content and the structure of the novel. Between chapters one and twelve, Helen Schlegel clashes with Paul Wilcox; and their encounter sets in motion a series of variations in the relationships of characters—Margaret befriends Mrs. Wilcox, Helen meets Leonard, and Mrs. Wilcox dies leaving Howards End to Margaret, unbeknownst to her. The most important chapter in the "expositional" section of Howards End is chapter five, where Forster tells us "the music had summed up to [Helen] all that had happened or could happen in her career"; for Helen's career is the foundation of the novel, and the rhythm created by the repetition of the phrase parallels the rhythm of the symphony. Before continuing in a movement-by-movement analysis, however, we must examine the allusions to Pan in imagery connected with Helen.

Forster joked about the Victorian cliché of Pan symbolism, but in *Howards End* he still used the spirit of Pan to convey the primitive stirrings that music suggests so well but are so difficult to describe. Instead of introducing the god himself, he gives a believable form to the sexual forces which are themselves formless and which, in Forster, are never named or spoken of except under the guise of some symbol.

Pan is alluded to not only in the word *panic* but in the image of heroes and shipwrecks that Helen envisions during the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. A shipwreck is the main incident in the Plutarchan tale of Pan.¹⁴ Helen's "heroes and goblins" of the third

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movement embody the fear and cowardice that traditionally follow a visit from Pan. She felt "panic and emptiness" when she saw the reliable walls of youth collapse the morning after Paul's kiss. Algernon Swinburne is responsible for reviving the nearly forgotten aspect of fear that accompanies Pan's presence, and his vivid poem about Pan, "A Nympholept," must have been in Forster's mind when he described Helen's fear. Lines such as the following portray the association:

We hear not the footfall that treads the sea, We hear not the moans of the winds that assail the pine: We see not if shipwreck reign in the storm's dim shrine;

But in all things evil and fearful that fear may scan, As in all things good, as in all things fair that fall, We know thee present and latent, the lord of man;¹⁵

Swinburne's images of "footfalls" of terror, shipwrecks, and the ambience of evil and fear in Pan's presence echo in Helen's response to the symphony. Forster hints at the connection between the "footfalls" of fear and general pessimism in Swinburne's poem and Helen's "goblins": "It remained as a goblin footfall, as a hint that all is not for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and that beneath these superstructures of wealth and art ["all things fair that fall"] there wanders an ill-fed boy, ..." (p. 42). Pan's presence in the imagery shows that for Helen his spirit is in Beethoven's music. As the music sums up Helen's career, so the linking repetition of the phrases "panic and emptiness" composes a rhythm that sums up the structure of Howards End. Pan's terrifying spirit continues to appear in the implications of that phrase. But it is more important to note how Forster emulates the structure and content, the order and the passion of Beethoven's symphony, because as he does so he makes Howards End a novel of prophecy. The repetition of the phrase, though still reminiscent of Pan's terror, takes on a larger meaning in its rhythmic whole, and it modulates into "Death destroys a man but the idea of death saves him." A close comparison of the second and third movements of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with the novel shows how it evokes the sensation of song or sound as it virtually translates sound into words. In Beethoven's second movement, a series of variations upon a double theme takes place. The first theme is in A flat major. It is a rather smooth, flowing theme ending in a kind of cold grace. The second theme, in C major, is in a square aggressive style with a purposeful progress. One

can hold closely to the themes at first, but by the end of the long movement, the extended, somewhat free plan of double variations becomes fantasizing in style.

In Howards End chapters 11–25, between Mrs. Wilcox's death and Mr. Wilcox's proposal, Forster, in developing the relationships between characters, parallels the variations of themes in Beethoven with the variations of the personalities of Helen Schlegel and Henry Wilcox and their relationship. In addition, he creates the slow movement of the Andante. The phrase "panic and emptiness" marks the beginning of the second movement of the novel. This time its context shows more sympathy toward the Wilcoxes. Forster varies ever so slightly the connotation of Helen's phrase, in keeping with the development of the themes. Mrs. Wilcox's funeral is over, and the younger Wilcoxes eat their breakfast; their father suffers alone in his bedroom. Charles and Evie speak sternly about the help, Chalkeley, who was responsible for the trees that were cut back during the funeral.

Brother and sister were not callous. They spoke thus, partly because they desired to keep Chalkeley up to the mark—a healthy desire in its way—partly because they avoided the personal note in life. All Wilcoxes did. It did not seem to them of supreme importance. Or it may be as Helen supposed: they realized its importance, but were afraid of it. Panic and emptiness, could one glance behind. They were not callous, and they left the breakfast-table with aching hearts (p. 90).

The second movement, beginning with the phrase "panic and emptiness," carries the variation of theme. That is, we gain a more sympathetic view of the Wilcoxes in this section than we do of Helen's passionate reaction provided in the "first movement."

We see in this second movement of *Howards End* the two equivalents of Beethoven's contrasting themes in A flat and C major. One need not label them specifically "inner life versus outer life," or "country versus London," but it is fair to say that the many values in *Howards End* provide analogies to contrasts in Beethoven's symphony. An example of the actual score may be a revealing aid.



Compare the above in A flat, graceful in piano dolce, to the theme below

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which is in the relative minor key of C major beginning in *forte* with aggressive chords:



To recognize in *Howards End* the equivalents to the double variations in the second movement of Beethoven's synphony, one need only observe how Forster varies the relationship and personalities of the two "opposed" characters, Henry Wilcox and Helen Schlegel. Such a comparison between notes and human characters is admittedly very impressionistic and based on little more than the emotional nuances of Beethoven's music. But we have seen that Forster himself engaged in impressionistic translations from notes to scenes in his analyses of Beethoven's works; and this practice makes the intuitive perception of the variation in the characterizations of Henry Wilcox and Helen Schlegel not only valid, but necessary for the complex understanding of Forster's work.

Beethoven's first themes in A flat and C major are "relative minors." They have completely different scales but may be combined to produce a series of chords in minor thirds. Although relative minor scales sound dissonant when played one after the other they can be combined to produce harmony. Henry Wilcox and Helen Schlegel, during the span of time between Mrs. Wilcox's death and Henry Wilcox's proposal, represent relative minors because their characters are opposed yet still related. They are opposed in their dedication to their respective "outer" and "inner" lives yet related in their almost brutal adherence to these values. Just as we lose Beethoven's original themes in the Andante (second movement), so, as Helen and Henry begin to take on some of each other's characters, we lose some of the elements of their personalities that distinguished one from the other.

At first Helen is single-minded in her worship of the "inner" life and in her dedication to personal responsibility. Henry is single-minded in exactly the opposite direction—he ignores precisely those values. But then Helen's attempts to help Leonard are inordinately rude, and her impulses to force Leonard into tune socially are as obsessive as was her reaction to Paul. Leonard's cause becomes a substitute target for Helen's sexual energy. Her character develops when, with Leonard's cause becoming her chief project, she comes closer to Wilcox's personality and we hear her use Wilcox's phrase "I have very little use for him in these days" (p. 134). She becomes more and more

preoccupied with "self" and in turn becomes as repressed and insensitive to others as is Wilcox. Henry Wilcox's character develops from one whom we knew first as husband and businessman to a man whom Forster described as uncivilized when he suspects that Margaret is attracted to Leonard Bast and is jealous (p. 144).

Thus Henry is aroused sexually and begins to court Margaret, while Helen retreats from romance and, taking up Leonard's cause, becomes a social reformer. In music, relative minors are compatible even though they oppose each other. Played together they produce fine harmony. In *Howards End* Margaret is the harmonic representation of the blended relative minors Helen and Henry. She writes to Helen, "Don't brood too much, . . . on the superiority of the unseen to the seen. It's true, but to brood on it is medieval. Our business is not to contrast the two, but to reconcile them" (p. 101–2). Like the harmony born of the two varying themes in Beethoven's Andante, Margaret combines the most positive traits of Henry's and Helen's values, continually exhibiting her tolerance and love for them both. This dedication to proportion makes her the harmony created by Helen's and Henry's intervals.

In addition, Forster's pace parallels the Andante. The Andante is a rather slow part of the symphony (in the concert hall Helen woolgathered during this part. Indeed, Beethoven's andantes never showed so much genius as did the other parts of his symphonies), and Forster achieved the same sensation of the lengthening of time in the "second movement" of his novel: whereas the first movement took place over six months (from Helen's stay at Howards End in June to Mrs. Wilcox's death after Christmas), Forster's second movement lets two years pass in a single sentence. Suddenly Margaret is wearing a pince-nez, and the life-long lease of their beloved Wickham Place runs out. In addition, Forster describes London and the country, giving a sense of London's slow expansion and the country's resulting decay. We see how in this second movement the original notion of the theme of love between Wilcoxes and Schlegels repeats but is varied, appearing this time between the older Wilcox and the older Schlegel in the steadier, less passionate movement of the novel. A close comparison of Beethoven's transition and last movement with the last section of Howards End will reveal Forster's skill in producing "musical prose" and some of the difficulties in resolving human relations, which are greater than those involved in resolving musical notes.

Beethoven's opening of the third movement is shadowy and haunting, with rather thin orchestration. Then the horns suddenly

remind us of the opening theme and rhythm of the first movement. An elephantine gambol prevails in the trio in the middle of the section. The rhythmic motif from the first movement returns and the orchestra dies out as if collapsed. The drums play a slow heartbeat. There remains still a memory of the rhythm from the first movement played against a scherzo rhythm. Berlioz describes the scherzo as a "strange composition; its first bars, although presenting nothing terrible, cause the strange emotion we experience under the magnetic glance of certain individuals. Everything in it is mysterious and somber." ¹⁶

The orchestra is urged back into the C major key as if the sun were about to burst through the clouds. The kettle drums play a low C (as Tibby notes), but the other instruments seem to want to introduce a different tonality in the chord of A flat. The low drums in C prevail and preserve the sentiment of the original key. "The ear hesitates," writes Berlioz, "uncertain as to how this harmonic mystery is about to resolve itself, when the dull pulsations of the kettledrum, becoming more and more intense, meet the violins who have rejoined the rhythmic movement and changed the harmony. . . . the kettledrum stubbornly continues its roll upon the C tonic" (p. 29). The suspense is unbearable until we are relieved by the trombones, from which we have not yet heard. They burst forth in a major mode into a triumphal march theme, and a coda. Berlioz says of this segment of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, "Everyone knows the effect of this thunderstroke; it is useless, therefore, to detain the reader with any further comment." (p. 29).

Forster opens his third movement in Howards End with an equally shadowy and haunting theme. Margaret suspects that Henry intends to ask her to marry him. Henry's approach reverberates with the cautious, frightened overture to personal relations we heard earlier in Paul and Helen's conflict. Forster echoes Beethoven's shadowy theme when he makes Henry cower away from the personal during his courtship. He expresses his love for Margaret in business words rather than personal ones. His embrace of Margaret in the garden is as sudden and as panicky as Paul's might have been with Helen. This strange courtship precedes the "blast of horns" when, hearing Margaret's news in the hills of Swanage, Helen cries out her phrase "panic and emptiness." It reminds us of the definitive opening motto of the symphony. To help us remember the original use of the phrase, just before Margaret arrives Helen is in the middle of reminiscing with her relatives about the original Howards End scene. Helen even describes those times in terminology that suggests music. "And in the autumn there began that anti-Pauline movement—..." (p. 167). Appropriately, it is spring now, two seasons, two years, and two movements later. In the recapitulation of themes in the last movement we re-live Helen's fears in the phrase "panic and emptiness" but with a slightly new, still more explanatory tone. Helen explains her fears of herself from a more mature self-knowledge. She recognizes that her sexual inexperience lies behind her obsessions with the Basts when she tells Margaret it is "because I'm an old maid"; biting her lip, she continues, "I can't think why I go on like this myself" (p. 189). With the echoed phrase and the succeeding explanation of Helen's regret about being an "old maid," Forster exhibits Helen's evolving knowledge of her self: her own knowledge that her repressed sexuality is behind her obsessions with Leonard's social reform.

The "blast of horns," "panic and emptiness," are followed by Henry's courtship which is rather like the "elephantine gambol" of Beethoven's third movement. Henry's incredible obtuseness could be likened to a happy elephant who does not notice small details trampled in his self-satisfied dance. Henry does not notice Tibby's lack of interest in discussions of imperialism, nor Helen's extreme disappointment with the prospective marriage. And he is insensitive to her frustration at the backfiring of her attempt to help the Basts, when it turns out that the "Porphyrion" is safe as houses after all.

A lull in Helen's activity matches the point where Beethoven's symphony dies out as if collapsed after the initial blast. Her silence warns of her next outburst. Forster recreates Beethoven's intensifying suspense when he says that

Helen's nerves were exasperated by the unlucky Bast business beyond the bounds of politeness. There might at any minute be a real explosion, which even Henry would notice. Henry must be removed (p. 189).

The low heart-beat of the kettledrums that underlies Beethoven's build-up of tension occurs in *Howards End* when Margaret is forced to return to Howards End to see what the mysterious Miss Avery has been up to with the Schlegels' furniture. Miss Avery's unpacking it provides yet another memory of the first movement; we are once again reminded that Mrs. Wilcox left Howards End to Margaret. The element of mystery, which Berlioz describes in the scherzo rhythm, appears in Forster's novel when he makes Miss Avery a continual reminder of the past in the references to the ghost of Mrs. Wilcox. She has a mysterious gaze and the psychic knowledge that the Schlegels should, and shall, live at

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Howards End. Margaret opens the door of Howards End and actually hears the sounds of a tympani.

But it was the heart of the house beating, faintly at first, then loudly, martially. It dominated the rain . . . Margaret flung open the door to the stairs. A noise as of drums seemed to deafen her (p. 198–9).

Miss Avery's strange insistence that the Schlegels will live in Howards End despite Margaret's opposite opinion parallels Beethoven's drums competing in low C with the rest of the orchestra as it plays in another key.

In Forster, as in Beethoven, this period of intensifying the suspense lasts some time. Helen's next and last use of the phrase "panic and emptiness" marks the beginning of the lengthy drum transition that leads into the fourth movement.

During the transition, Helen brings the Basts to Oniton and creates an inordinate amount of tension when it is found that Henry has had an affair with Jacky. After Helen has upset things sufficiently, possibly ruined the marriages of both Margaret and Leonard, she experiences a transition. She turns from her sexual sublimation, in her preoccupation with the Wilcoxes and the Basts, to a larger cause. Her phrase "panic and emptiness" changes into "Death destroys a man; but the idea of Death saves him" (p. 236). The idea of death reveals to Helen the eternal foes and the happiness of saying I am I. We learn later that when she transposes these phrases she consummates her sexual desires. Her night with Leonard enables her to express her sexual impulses and erase her fears of being an old maid. No longer repressed, her sexuality does not now so insistently rule her thoughts. It is true that her flight from the country is an escape from responsibility, but she does realize how she had intruded on and damaged the lives of the Basts and her own sister's marriage. When she speaks with Tibby before she departs, her face expresses a sincerity which strikes a chord even in Tibby's frozen emotions. Her hysteria is nothing new to Tibby, but this time "these tears touched him as something unusual. They were nearer the things that did concern him, such as music" (p. 248). Helen now sees reason to be hysterical about what she has done to others. Her sexual experience, in conjunction with her new liberating ideas about death, allows her to express her convictions more sincerely than ever before.

The drum transition in the novel consists partly of Helen's and Margaret's sexual consummations. Helen's is sudden and impulsive and accompanied by the primal song of a river; Margaret's is thought out and "without the aid of music" (p. 255). Helen's sudden and unex-

plained absence intensifies the suspense that leads into the fourth movement. Forster recreates Beethoven's expressive mounting energy, which makes us wonder whether to hope or to fear, when he leaves several aspects of the plot unexplained. We do not know what is to happen to Howards End when Henry and Margaret make plans to build a house of their own; we are uncertain as to what has become of Leonard and Jacky, and of Helen. The shadowy battle between the drums and the rest of the orchestra lasts all the way through Mrs. Munt's lingering and unsuccessful death at Swanage and the mounting elevation of concern for Helen's strange departure.

Naturally the tension is finally relieved at Howards End. The third movement ends in the novel when Margaret and Helen are successfully reunited there. The trombone blast that leads into the coda (fourth movement) is paralleled when Margaret outwits Henry and manages to lock herself in Howards End with her sister, despite her respect for Henry and despite his clever and deceitful behavior. All their furniture is there and no trace of Wilcox. There is an uplifting sense of resolution to this scene. The victory of the Schlegels in their rightful home, Howards End, over "the men" provides a temporary resolution as passionate and moving as the end of Beethoven's third movement. Both artists, however, need to add a coda, a formal ending to explain what has happened to the rest of the scraps of rhythm they have introduced on the way. In Beethoven's music we need to find out what happened to the beginning themes so prevalent earlier. In Forster, for the sake of realism, we need to find out what has happened to Leonard Bast, how Margaret's marriage will proceed after her rebellion, what Helen's plans are now that she is pregnant, and, finally, what is to become of Howards End.

We remember Helen's imagistic response to the third and fourth movements of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, to "look out for the part where you think you have done with the goblins and they come back, . . ." (p. 30). Indeed, in the coda, the unresolved question of Leonard Bast's fate is answered when he returns to the Schlegel sisters, this time at Howards End. He dies in a scene in which Charles' action with the sword brings Beethoven's brass to life. Leonard's terrified heart fails; in Charles' merciless blows, the entire orchestra's forcefully repeated chords resound. Like Porphyry's shepherds, who worshipped Pan but died at the sight of him, 17 Leonard meets his death at the sight of that which he worships: the upper-middle class family and his first opportunity to have become a part of a more cultured level of society.

Eventually, all turns out for the best, at least for Helen, when she,

Margaret, and Henry live in the country together. As Beethoven "amid vast roarings of a superhuman joy, led his Fifth Symphony to its conclusion" (pp. 31–32), Forster heroically leads his novel to a conclusion. Perhaps Forster would like us to believe that the novel's ending, like that of the symphony, is in proportion. Henry retires in the country, Helen confesses to liking him again, and Margaret will inherit Howards End. But to manage this "connection," Forster had to kill Leonard Bast, almost ruin Henry, impregnate Helen out of wedlock, and jail Charles. He could hardly expect us to consider this a successful ending, a happy solution—to a most difficult conflict.

Helen's fantasy from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony warns that the end of the book may not give us the resolution we would like.

But the goblins were there. They could return. He had said so bravely, and that is why one can trust Beethoven when he says other things (p. 32).

Is this the end of Beethoven's symphony, or is it Forster's opinion of his own novel? An amateur listens to Beethoven's Symphony and hears nothing but the sound of perfect, almost pompous, resolution. If Forster's unchangeable human characters, as opposed to Beethoven's sturdy musical notes, could bring themselves into perfect resolved harmony, would not they be superhuman and thus not real? Would not Forster be slipping back into fantasy? The red dust still looms on the horizon, bringing threats from the outer world. The characters' union is apparently in a major key, but their lives to come cannot be guaranteed such harmony. Forster excuses himself from perfect harmony at the end of the novel by claiming that goblins could return to Beethoven's symphony.

Critics thought that the ending of the Fifth Symphony was trite and unsuccessful. Berlioz defended it: he rationalizes the ending by saying that the finale cannot be as emotionally satisfying because all our emotion is spent on the magnificent transition.

Music cannot, in the state we know it, produce a more violent effect than the transition from the scherzo to the triumphal march. It was, therefore, quite impossible to proceed with its augmentation.¹⁸

The transition in *Howards End* spends all our energy in the same way. The drama of Oniton, Helen's mysterious absence, and the triumphal reunion at Howards End, all tax our emotions so that any formal closing of the novel must be a let-down.

Perhaps Forster was truer to the ending of the Symphony than an amateur musician can appreciate. If Beethoven's ending seemed trite and pompous to his critics, Forster has done well to recreate that aspect of the symphony in his "happily ever after" closing scene of *Howards End.* The real ending—the resolution—of the symphony happens just after the drum transition; even Tibby is excited by that part. And Forster's most exciting part of the novel occurs in this same structural and emotional place, his transition.

But since this is a novel and not a piece of music, another type of inaudible harmony is at work, a harmony of structure and content. Forster harmonizes his steady rhythm and structure with his "whole" human emotions. Beethoven's structure and content harmonize in the same way. Had Forster ended his novel with believable happiness and unison, without any sense of possible future discord, he would not have obtained the balance of order counterpointed by imperfect emotions. It would be unison and not harmony. In a sense, the disharmony of his human characters creates the "internal harmony" of Forster's art.

- ¹ E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Abinger Edition Vol. 12 (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 86.
 - ² *Ibid.*, p. 86. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- ⁴ Linda Hutcheon, "Music in the Critical Writings of E. M. Forster," in E. M. Forster: Centenary Revaluations, ed. Judith Scherer Herz and Robert R. Martin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 85.

⁵ Forster, "Not Listening to Music," *Two Cheers for Democracy*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Abinger Edition Vol. 11 (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), p. 122.

- ⁶ Forster, "The Raison d'Etre of Criticism of the Arts," TCD, p. 105.
- ⁷ Forster, Aspects, p. 94.
- ⁸ Forster, *Howards End*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Abinger Edition Vol. 4 (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 106. Subsequent page references in parentheses are to this edition.
 - 5 Forster, Aspects, p. 116.
- ¹⁰ Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 269.
 - 11 Hutcheon, p. 86.
 - 12 Ibid., p. 91.
- ¹³ Anton Felix Schindler, *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, ed. Donald MacArdle, trans. Constance S. Jolly (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 147. Schindler describes how "the composer himself . . . pointed to the beginning of the first movement and expressed in these words the fundamental idea of his work: 'Thus Fate knocks at the door!'"
- ¹⁴ Years of philological distortion have altered the facts, whatever they may have been. Some say the ships were becalmed, others embellish the tale with storms and shipwrecks. Whatever the facts, the image captures some people's recollection of Plutarch's Tale.

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¹⁵ Algernon Swinburne, "A Nympholept"; see Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Great God* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 164.

16 Hector Berlioz, Beethoven, trans. Ralph De Sola (Boston: Crescendo Pub-

lishing Co., 1975), p. 29.

17 Eusebias wrote, "Porphry affirms that Pan being one of the good demons appeared once upon a time to those who were working in the fields ... those to whom this blessed sight was vouchsafed all died at once . . . for nine persons were found dead; . . ." (Merivale, p. 162).

18 Berlioz, p. 30.

A Passage to India, the National Movement, and Independence

FRANCES B. SINGH

The complex issue of Indian independence or *swaraj* was uppermost in the minds of many political leaders during *A Passage to India*'s long gestation, 1912–1924. Only a few critics, however, have pointed out the novel's relationship to the national movement during those years. This paper attempts to develop two positions regarding *A Passage to India* and the movement between 1912 and 1924. The first is that independence is a complex issue in the novel, and reflects the viewpoints of contemporary politicians such as Mohammed Iqbal, Mohammed Ali, M. K. Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru. The second is that the influence of the Hindu and Muslim religions can be traced in the attitudes and actions of two characters who have been shaped by these religions—Godbole and Aziz.

During those twelve years, Muslim politicians belonging to a group called the Young Party developed an ideology based on Islam.³ The Young Party was made up primarily of Western-educated journalists and lawyers, many of whom were practicing poets as well. Two of its members were Mohammed Ali (1878–1931), a journalist and poet, and Mohammed Iqbal (1877–1938), a lawyer better known for his poetry. Sensitive to the political decline of their community from its heights under the Mughals, Young Partymen saw the political regeneration of Muslims coming through their awareness of their Islamic heritage. To this end, Ali, Iqbal and others wrote poetry which drew heavily on Islamic sources. The purpose was to make Muslims realize that since their religious and cultural traditions were so different from those of the Hindus, their political destiny also lay apart from their Hindu neighbors'. This separatist ideology expressed itself in various ways. For example, it led Young Party activists to demand separate Muslim

electorates in 1906 and 1915, and to support the call for "complete independence free from foreign control" made by the president of the Muslim League at a Congress party session in 1921. It made them see their religion as the boundaryless nation to which all Muslims belonged, and themselves as patriots of Islam, rather than of India. This concept of religion-based nationality fueled the *Khilafat* agitation of 1920–23, in which Indian Muslims led by Ali protested Britain's acquiescence in the dismemberment of Turkey after World War I; that country was supposed to be the home of the *Khalifa* or Caliph, the spiritual leader of Islam—their "real" homeland.

Aziz has many affinities with the Young Partymen. He is a Western-trained professional, a doctor like another of the leaders of the Young Party, Dr. M. A. Ansari (1880-1936), and a poet with a Muslim sensibility.4 For this reason, the imagery in his poems runs to bulbuls and roses, the sentiments to pathos, the themes to love and the decay of Islam.5 When asked by the Hindu Das to write a poem for "Indians generally" (p. 264), Aziz says that "there is no such thing in existence as the general Indian" (p. 264), implying that for him Indian society is divided into two groups, Hindu and Muslim, each with its own special interests and separate modes of perception. And though flattered by the request, so Muslim is his self-perception that he cannot write the poem. "The feel of the pen between his fingers generated bulbuls at once" (p. 265). At the end of the book, the highly Islamic poem which flits through his mind about "Mecca-the Caaba of Union—the thorn-bushes where pilgrims die before they have seen the Friend" (p. 315) turns into a political vision of "complete independence free from foreign control." "India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one!" (p. 315). This jump from poetry to politics corroborates the Young Party position that poetry developed the political consciousness. Igbal's statement, written in his diary some time between 1912 and 1918, that "nations are born in the hearts of poets"6 is literally demonstrated here.

However, while Aziz' Young Party orientation leads him to formulate an independent country, that nation is as different from what Muslim politicians like Iqbal and Ali had in mind as Mecca, the place mentioned in the poem, is from India, the place mentioned in the political statement. The nation which they conceived was to be an Islamic one meant exclusively for Muslims, an extension of Mecca. Aziz' state, on the other hand, is plural and inclusive: "Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all. . . ." This radical difference suggests that another influence is affecting Aziz.

The name of this influence is not given in the text, but the history of the period reveals it to be M. K. Gandhi. Gandhi returned to India in 1915 after twenty years in South Africa with well-developed ideas about Hindu-Muslim relations, Indian independence, and the national movement. His experiences in South Africa, where he had brought Indian Muslims and Hindus together, had convinced him that *swaraj* lay in the resolution of Hindu-Muslim tensions and the transformation of the relationship into one based on friendship and co-operation. Communal harmony, therefore, was associated with independence. This association was the basis for his beliefs that India was a nation because many religious communities lived there, and that Indian nationalism had to take this pluralism into account when it formulated a concept of India. §

Gandhi's concept of Indian independence as predicated upon communal harmony was in marked contrast to that of the Young Partymen, for whom it was political independence from England. Other remarks of Gandhi sharpen the contrast even further. In 1909, he said that communal harmony was "an indispensable condition for the salvation of India," and in his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, he wrote that all his ventures in the political field were directed to achieving "self-realization, [seeing] God face to face, [attaining] *Moksha*," salvation or liberation. Both these remarks indicate that for Gandhi, the achievement of communal harmony could be described also in religious terms, as salvation or liberation on a national and personal level. As I will show later, through Godbole, Forster also develops *swaraj* along religious lines by connecting communal harmony and the state of *moksha*.

Between 1920 and 1923, Gandhi attempted to realize his conception of Indian independence as basically communal harmony by throwing his support behind the *Khilafat* agitation and getting Hindus to support it also. The function of this entente, according to Gandhi, was "to secure Mohamedan friendship for the Hindus and thereby internal peace also, and . . . transform ill will into affection for the British." This second goal was subsequently developed into a concept of partnership or friendship based on equality. "We desire," Gandhi wrote in the Calcutta daily, *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, "to live on terms of friendship with Englishmen, but that friendship must be on terms of friendship of equals. . . ."12 Gandhi was still arguing for a partnership with England, "such as can exist between two equals," in 1931, two years after the Congress, under Nehru's instigation, had declared political independence its objective.

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Aziz' concept of independence parallels Gandhi's in being a strategy for transforming ill will into affection and achieving that state of friendship which Gandhi regarded as one of the goals of *swaraj*.

"We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's fifty five-hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then"—he rose against him furiously—"and then," he concluded, half kissing him, "you and I shall be friends." (p. 317)

These lines addressed to Fielding direct the rhetoric of political independence toward affection and friendship and show that for Aziz political independence is not an end in itself. The real end is the transformation of hate into friendship. Though the emphasis on political independence as a pre-condition for friendship is not characteristic of Gandhi during the *Passage* years, the very seeing of it as a pre-condition rather than as an ultimate desideratum reveals that Aziz' orientation has shifted toward Gandhi and away from Ali. The fact that the violent language of Aziz' speech to Fielding, which is rhetorically in keeping with some remarks reportedly made by Ali, ¹⁴ gives way to a Gandhian vocabulary of affection and friendship corroborates this point.

Aziz' character, then, though indebted to Young Party politics, seems to be restructuring itself on Gandhian lines at the end of the novel. This reformulation of character suggests that Forster did not agree with the thrust of Muslim politics in the teens and twenties. But because Aziz writes the same Islamic-inspired poetry throughout the novel, it appears that Forster also believed that a non-Muslim political vision should go together with a Muslim aesthetic sensibility. In this way, Forster creates a synthesis of poetry and politics different from Young Partymen's that still gives assent to the proposition that poets are the creators of nations. By means of this new synthesis, he twists Iqbal's statement, "Be a Moslem before you are an Indian," To mean, "You can be an Indian first because you are a Moslem." In so doing, Forster shows that a Muslim can develop and retain an identity—the great concern of the Young Partymen—without resorting to political separatism, the division of India along religious lines.

What Forster saw as politically valuable in the Muslim character, therefore, was its poetic component. By bringing the Muslim into touch with his roots, poetry enabled him to forge a political identity. Though Forster disagreed with the thrust of the political identity which the

Young Party activists had created through this method, he had no disagreement with the method as such. For this reason, he maintains the connection between poetry and politics in Aziz, but replaces the separatist political ideology with a Gandhian one stressing plurality and inclusiveness. By having Aziz come up with a vision opposite to Iqbal's, Forster demonstrates that since poetry could generate a united India as well as a Pakistan, a separate country for Indian Muslims, it could also prove that India was hospitable to Muslims.

Through the presence of Young Party ideology in Aziz' character, Forster is making the point that Islam shaped a political stance during the *Passage* years. But to the extent that Aziz is affected by Gandhi, he is also being affected by an ideology deriving from Hinduism. Nonviolence, the basis of *swaraj*, is a fully-developed principle in Vaishnavism, ¹⁶ a sect of Hinduism. Inclusiveness is a characteristic of Hinduism that distinguishes it from both Christianity and Islam. ¹⁷ The desire to achieve *moksha*, which Gandhi said was the objective of all his political endeavors, is the traditional goal toward which Hindus are supposed to strive. Historically, Hinduism is associated with union, the absorption and integration of originally non-Hindu groups within India into the Hindu fold. ¹⁸ Thus, to say that the Muslim Aziz accepts the drive of Gandhian *swaraj* is also to imply that he has rejected Muslim separatism in favor of Hindu inclusiveness and become a political Hindu.

This political *volte-face* is presented humorously in the third section where Forster says that in Mau, Aziz, on account of his friendship with Godbole, was deemed a Brahmin when it came to court intrigue, i.e., state politics. Taken seriously, Aziz' "neo-Brahminism" reflects some of the choices made by Indian Muslims in the early twentieth century in response to the national movement. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote about these choices in his *Discovery of India*:

... nationalism had a strong appeal to the Moslem mind in India... Yet Indian nationalism was dominated by Hindus and had a Hinduized look. So a conflict arose in the Moslem mind: many accepted that nationalism, trying to influence it in the direction of their choice; many sympathized with it and yet remained aloof, uncertain; and yet many others began to drift in a separatist direction for which Iqbal's poetic and philosophic approach had prepared them.¹⁹

Aziz' progress through the novel illustrates the various Muslim responses to the national movement. At first, while "taking no interest in

politics" (p. 120), he is also moved by the separatist strain in Islamic poetry. At the end, however, he decides to accept Hindu nationalism modified so as to include political independence.

Hinduism's political dimension also offers a new entrée into the third section of the novel. The festival of Gokul Astami, which celebrates the birth of Krishna, has the qualities of inclusiveness and union. Fun and games, for instance, are included as ways of celebrating; and Godbole unites a wasp and Mrs. Moore to God. The birth of Krishna, which "saved the world" (p. 285) in religious terms, is, however, also "the salvation of India" in political terms because it brings about communal harmony between Hindus and non-Hindus, Indians and English people. This extension of the Hindu religion into the political realm so as to envisage a plural society suggests that what is born during the rites is not only Krishna, but India herself, in all her inclusive wholeness.

The political implications of Hinduism are brought into focus through Godbole. As he dances in religious ecstasy, his ability to love and imitate God increases. At the height of the celebrations, that spiritual power redeems history. "All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for birds, caves, railways, and stars; all became joy, all laughter, there had never been disease nor doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear" (p. 285). Originally a series of negative relationships based on "doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty," history has now been revised so as to bring out harmony and unity among diverse things and people, particularly in India, as the references to Indians and caves indicate. For once doubt and misunderstanding, the source of Hindu-Muslim tensions, are removed, all becomes joy for Indians, Hindu as well as Muslim. Then, by including the railways, which had been introduced by the English and were almost synonymous with them and their rule, in the context of birds, stars and caves, Godbole makes the English become a natural part of India, a part of her landscape. The Indianization and naturalizing of the railways symbolically frees India from the English rule which had been imposed on it. Since the railways mechanically tied the country together, they facilitated and consolidated the British hold over India-a point Gandhi makes in Hind Swaraj (p. 45). The power of Godbole's love, however, transforms this exploitative mechanical connection between England and India into one where the components are equal and form one whole-a partnership of equals created and held together by love rather than force, such as Gandi wanted to have between India and England during and even after the Passage years (The Nation's Voice, pp. 8-9). The transformation of the railways is, thus, a parable of swaraj.

In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi laid down the steps by which this new and liberated connection could be achieved. He said that the "English had to become Indianized" (p. 65); that it lay with Indians "to bring about such a state of things" (p. 65); and that that could happen only if the relationship were "sunk in a religious soil" (p. 101). Forster implicitly carries out these three steps by making Godbole naturalize the railways during a religious ceremony. In so doing, Forster, through Godbole, lays the foundation for a liberated, united, inclusive, and diverse society. Forster gives us an inkling of the components and dynamics of that society when the boats bearing Aziz, Fielding, Stella, and Ralph collide in the Mau tank at the same time that the village of Gokul is being immersed. Forster calls this confounding of Hindu, Muslim and English the "climax" (p. 310) of the celebrations, and in a very Gandhian way it is, for the different groups which are involved with India are joyously united and made equal. The climax of the celebrations is swaraj: that state of freedom, achieved through spiritual exercise, that is also union and partnership.

This transformation of political relationships takes place during a Hindu festival. Mohammed Ali once commented that the early Indian nationalists, Gokhale and Tilak, in whose footsteps Gandhi followed, derived their "energising force from Hindu religion."20 Forster makes that relationship explicit by showing how the energizing force of Hinduism, the power animating Godbole's dancing, leads to a political vision which emphasizes unity and diversity. Ali, however, phrased his comment so as to make Indian nationalism as filtered through a Hindu consciousness distasteful to Muslims and to imply that Muslims would lose their identity in an independent India led by Hindus, who constituted the majority of the population. Godbole's achievement, however, transcends its basis in Hindu religion because it makes for rapport between communities. The state of salvation or moksha which he achieves personally becomes "the salvation of India" that Gandhi regarded as an aspect of swaraj. This unconsciously Gandhian extension of moksha from the personal to the national explains why Forster calls the celebrations the "triumph of India" (p. 280). India: not Hinduism.

The distinguishing characteristic of the Gokul Astami celebrations is chaos. There is cacophony, clutter, no organized way of celebrating. The misspelling "God si Love" (p. 283), about which Forster asks, "Is this the final message of India?" (p. 283), sums up the confusion. Forster's presentation of the chaos reveals that he finds it aesthetically unappealing. At the same time, however, he shows that for a person like Godbole, from an Indian point of view, chaos is a creative and

freeing medium, leading to "the triumph of India." Through Godbole, then, Forster reevaluates the concept of chaos. Chaos is bad form from a Western perspective, but in India it is a positive state that creates a vision of spiritual and political wholeness. This message about the meaning of chaos is what Forster conveys to the West through the Hindu celebrations.

This positive attitude toward chaos is completely un-Western²¹ and also completely Gandhian. In the text, Mrs. Moore's inability to handle chaos or muddle brings about her collapse. One of the common arguments used by the British against granting independence to India was that independence would quickly degenerate into chaos, by which they meant a Hindu-Muslim bloodbath. During the Second Round Table Conference in 1931, Gandhi countered this argument by stating that Hindu-Muslim problems would settle themselves of their own accord once India was given its moral right "to wander in the wilderness" (The Nation's Voice, pp. 38, 157), a phrase connoting living in chaos. Forster and Gandhi, thus, both accept that chaos is constructive, that it will be the medium in which Indian independence will be born, and the form in which "the triumph of India" will initially appear. By presenting chaos in this constructive way, Forster shows how a quality originally identified with Hinduism provides the raison d'être for Indian independence. In this way, A Passage to India reflects the Hindu relationship between religion and nationalist politics prevalent between 1912 and 1924.

That Forster should create a situation in the third section of the novel which expresses the content and consequences of Gandhian swaraj is not surprising, since Forster's commitment to love and "connection" would make him think along the same lines as Gandhi, who was committed to improving relations between the members of India's many communities.²² But Forster did more than show preference for one concept of independence over another. He showed that it was possible for a Muslim with a highly-developed Muslim self-consciousness to be a witness for Gandhian swaraj, which derives from Hinduism, without anything detrimental happening to his Muslim identity, symbolized by the particular kind of poetry which flows organically from him. This is what Ali implied was impossible when he spoke distastefully of the Hindu element in the national movement, and what Gandhi hoped to prove possible when he threw his support behind the Khilafat agitation.

Aziz' transformation into a political Hindu, a state which allows him to say, "I am an Indian at last" (p. 288), and yet to continue writing

Islamic poetry, brings into being the new Indian, a culturally composite being, for the new India, a culturally composite country. The creation of this new Indian, Muslim in sensibility, Hindu in political outlook, is Forster's implicit contribution to the national movement. It is a personal rendering of Gandhi's idea of uniting Hindus and Muslims, a fictional counterpart to what Gandhi was trying to achieve through the medium of politics during the same period of time that A Passage to India was a work in progress.

Aziz' transformation takes place in Mau, a remote Hindu princely state that had once been home to a Muslim saint who had freed prisoners and whose action is now commemorated during the Gokul Astami celebrations by the ritual pardoning of one prisoner. The fact that in Mau a Muslim act for freedom has been incorporated into a Hindu holiday that creates an even greater freedom makes it an excellent setting for Aziz' own transformation, but Mau's location deep in the interior is also significant. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi associated living in remote places with the development of a sense of patriotism and nationalism that could blossom into a legitimate desire for Home Rule or political independence. He counseled those who love India to "go into the interior . . . and live there for six months; you might then be patriotic and speak of Home Rule" (p. 63). Such places, he argued, by being untouched by Western civilization, were the "real" India. By making those who went there shed their Western ways and live in a traditional Indian way, they freed one from one's previous dependence on the British and brought about personal swaraj or self-rule. This idea, that independence exists when and where Indians accept their Indianness, re-Indianize themselves by following their traditional civilization and rejecting modern innovations, is central to Hind Swaraj. 23

Mau looks like the kind of place Gandhi had in mind as a developer of a nationalist consciousness and self-rule. Located deep in the "remote jungle where the sahib seldom comes" (p. 288), it is free of some basic values of Western civilization. Reason and form, for example, have no place in the Gokul Astami celebrations, which seem to be the most important fact of life in Mau; Aziz stops practicing Western medicine there.²⁴ This acceptance of a totally indigenous atmosphere in which to function induces in Aziz the conscious feeling that he is "an Indian at last." The sense of having an identity that owes nothing to the West and exists in the context of a traditional society is, thus, in keeping with Gandhi's ideas about *swaraj*. The political potential of remote places that Gandhi noted was realized by Forster in the third section of *A Passage to India*.

Mau, however, is significant, not only because it is a fictional version of Gandhi's theoretical place, but because it is so Hindu. Forster writes, "For here the cleavage was between Brahman and non-Brahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the running, and sometimes not mentioned for days" (pp. 288-9). At this point, it is instructive to bring up some comments that Iqbal made to Jawaharlal Nehru in the thirties. He told Nehru that Hindus could be patriots because India was the birthplace of their religion and traditions. Muslims, on the other hand, having come to India only in the eighth century, were aliens to the country and owed their allegiance to their faith and its traditions. They could not be patriots to a land, like Hindus; patriotism for them was loyalty to Islam.25 This familiar separatist argument is subverted in the third section of Passage, where Forster presents Mau both as the cradle of Hinduism and of India herself. Thus, the Hindu celebrations are called "the triumph of India"; the Hindu aesthetic of clutter and confusion "the final message of India." In other words, it is Mau's Hinduness that makes it a symbol for India in Iqbal's terms. But by then presenting Hinduism's freeing vision as extensive, inclusive and eclectic, Forster also shows that it is possible for a Muslim like Aziz to become an Indian patriot, a nationalist, and yet remain a Muslim. By stressing the nature and effect of Hinduism's vision, Forster disproves Iqbal's contention that only Hindus could owe allegiance to India. Rather, he shows that because Hinduism creates a unifying and inclusive vision of freedom, a Muslim has a place in the country where Hinduism's cradle is located.

Aziz' going to Mau is, therefore, a political act that makes several points. First, by going to Mau, Aziz takes a stand against the policy of separatism which many Young Partymen advocated. Although the Native States, like the fictional Mau, were legally separate from British India, culturally they were not, and by going to Mau, Aziz accepts the indigenous culture and traditions which have shaped India. Thus, Aziz' patriotic outburst at the end follows logically from Forster's presentation of Mau as a native, traditional and Hindu place. Independently of Gandhi, Forster came to the same conclusion: that acceptance of indigenous tradition was the basis of independence.

Aziz' acceptance of Mau as the necessary spiritual core of independent India makes his deliberate rejection of a political career in British India after his trial easier to understand. As the careers of Ali and Iqbal illustrate, nationalist politics in the teens and twenties more likely than not spelled separatism for Muslims. But since Forster, like Gandhi, believed in unity (the wholeness of India) not its reconstruction (its

division along religious lines)—the proper location for the person who was to convey that message was a place where that vision of unity could be achieved. Forster presented Mau in this way. The fact that the vision doesn't last only means that India was not ready for it, not that it was an impossibility. Gandhi had implied much the same thing when he prophesied that if the Hindu-Muslim entente of 1920 held, there would be *swaraj* in one year.²⁶ As it turned out, the entente disintegrated and independence had to wait. Forster, like Gandhi, therefore, predicated a state upon which *swaraj* could be based. Forster's entente was called Mau, and it projected the ideal of *Hind Swaraj* as viable, but not immediately realizable.

Nirad Chaudhuri criticized E. M. Forster for using a Muslim as his chief protagonist since Hindus were in the forefront of the national movement.²⁷ Yet because the fact that Chaudhuri points to is correct, the choice of a Muslim who develops like Aziz is all the more significant. It reveals that A Passage to India breathes a Gandhian spirit. It is not only that Forster was partial to Muslims that made him choose Aziz as his central character. Rather, he saw, like many of the political leaders of the early twentieth century, that in India, religion and politics went hand in hand. He picked upon a Muslim because he believed that if a Muslim could thrive under the influence of Hindu politics, then India's nationhood could never be belittled.²⁸ In this way, Forster expresses in fiction what Gandhi had also said, that India was a nation because there were people belonging to different communities living there.

Second, showing Aziz secure in the overwhelmingly Hindu atmosphere of Mau makes him a stronger believer in the new nationalism championed by Gandhi than were the Muslim politicians active during the *Passage* years, who were afraid that they would lose power once independence came because they would be in the minority. The confidence that Aziz manifests is what Gandhi hoped to instil among Muslim politicians, and never did, except for Ansari and a few others. A *Passage to India* dramatizes the point of Gandhi's message to the Muslims, that in India under *swaraj* there would be nothing to fear. The Muslim whom Forster created can be seen, therefore, as a symbol of those whom Gandhi also had hoped to create during the *Passage* years. Had he been able to create those special and dear friends (the meaning of the name 'Aziz' in Urdu), perhaps Pakistan would never have come to seem a necessity.

Third, by bringing Aziz, a resident of British India, to Mau, Forster takes Gandhi's key idea—Hindu-Muslim unity—to a Native State.

This may be considered parallel to Gandhi's aim with regard to the Native States in the twenties.²⁹ Between 1920 and 1927, when Gandhi was at the helm of Congress politics, the stated Congress policy was that the Native States were outside the scope of nationalist activity because they were separate units, not under British control.³⁰ Consequently, Gandhi did not encourage nationalist agitation being imported into a Native State through the Congress organization. On the other hand, he had no objection to the spirit of the Congress entering such a place through individuals acting in their capacity as individual believers in swaraj.31 This is what Aziz does. By going to a Hindu Native State because he thinks he "could write poetry there" (p. 266) and because he feels that Muslims "must try to appreciate . . . Hindus" (p. 266), Aziz initiates a Muslim-Hindu entente and unites Islamic poetry and Hindu India, British and Native India. The drive toward union establishes the closeness of Forster's and Gandhi's ideas about the national movement and about India's future as an independent nation in the early twentieth century.

¹ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, "Passage to and from India," Encounter, 2 (1954), 19–22; Andrew Shonfield, "The Politics of Forster's India." Encounter, 30 (1968), 62–9; Harland S. Nelson and G. K. Das, "Shonfield's and Forster's India: A Controversial Exchange," Encounter, 30 (1968), 94–5; Jeffrey Meyers, "The Politics of A Passage to India, JML, 1 (1970), 329–38; G. K. Das, E. M. Forster's India (London: Macmillan, 1977); Molly Mahood, The Colonial Encounter: A Reading of Six Novels (London: Rex Collins, 1977), pp. 65–91.

² At times I use information that predates and postdates A Passage to India by a few years. The introduction of Hind Swaraj, published in 1909, and the Round Table talks, held in 1931, however, do not in any way change the relationship I posit. The extended time frame just indicates that the ideas of Passage existed in Gandhi's mind before and after the novel's publication.

³ For information about Muslim politics during the *Passage* years, see esp., P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972) and Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims*, 1860–1923 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974). This paragraph is indebted to the above two works.

⁴ By focussing on Aziz' connections to Young Partymen, I am not implying that Syed Ross Masood (1890–1937) is not the basic source for Aziz. Masood was a highly sociable person, and Ali, Ansari, and Iqbal were his contemporaries and good friends. Since it was through Masood that Forster met Ali and Ansari, finding them in Aziz actually recalls Masood's warm and outgoing personality, which had captivated Forster. See P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), I, 228–9.

⁵ For this reason, when the Hindu Das asks Aziz to write a poem, he also asks him not to "introduce too many Persian expressions . . . and not too much about the bulbul." A Passage to India, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (Harmondsworth:

Penguin, 1936, rpt. 1984), p. 264. All references to A Passage to India are to this text.

⁶ Quoted in Lini S. May, Ighal: His Life and Times (Lahore: Ashraf Press,

1974), p. 87.

⁷ See Judith M. Brown, Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics, 1915–1922, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972), on Gandhi's role in Indian politics during most of the Passage years.

⁸ See M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, trans. Mahadev Desai (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1909, rev. new ed., 1939, rpt. 1982), p. 49. All

references to Hind Swaraj are to this edition.

⁹ Gandhi to A. Ali, 6 September 1909, quoted in Brown, p. 9.

¹⁰ M. K. Gandhi, An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth, trans. Mahadev Desai (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1927, rpt. 1983), p. x. All references to this work are to this edition.

¹¹ Young India, 5 May 1920, quoted in Robinson, p. 300. ¹² Amrit Bazar Patrika, 2 February 1921, quoted in Das, p. 23.

¹³ Gandhi presented this argument at the Second Round Table Conference held in October, 1931. His speeches at the conference were reprinted in *The Nation's Voice*, ed. C. A. Rajagopalachari and J. D. Kumarappa (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1932). The phrase occurs on p. 8. All references to Gandhi's remarks during this conference are to this edition.

14 See Das, p. 133.

15 Quoted in May, p. 240.

¹⁶ Brown, pp. 6-7.

¹⁷ Michael Spencer, "Hinduism in E. M. Forster's A Passage to India," Journal of Asian Studies, 27 (1968), 286–7.

¹⁸ Arthur Lall, The Emergence of Modern India (New York: Columbia Univ.

Press, 1981), pp. 3-5.

¹⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 3rd ed. (Calcutta: Signet Press, 1947), p. 292.

²⁰ Comrade (Calcutta), 19 August 1911, quoted in Robinson, p. 201.

²¹ Spencer, p. 287, also makes this point.

²² Das, p. 45, also draws this connection between Forster and Gandhi.

²³ See Brown, p. 12.

²⁴ In *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 58–60, Gandhi rejects Western medicine. See also Das, p. 65.

25 May, p. 250.

²⁶ Young India, 22 September 1920, quoted in Brown, p. 307.

²⁷ Chaudhuri, pp. 19-22.

²⁸ For an extended study of the social, political, literary, and cultural consequences of the West's deprivation of nationhood to the East through such tactics as belittling, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

²⁹ Gandhi's writings on the Native States were collected in *The Native States' Problem* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1941). Pp. 7–15 deal with

the years under discussion.

³⁰ See P. D. Kaushik, *The Congress Ideology and Programme*, 1920–47 (Bombay: Allied, 1964), p. 101. However, Rajat K. Ray, "Mewar: The Breakdown of the Princely Order," in Robin Jeffrey, ed. *People*, *Princes and Paramount Power*

(Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 205–39, shows that in some states there were preexisting socio-economic mechanisms that could initiate Gandhi-type movements like mass satyagraha (passive resistance), in spite of the absence of

the Congress Party.

³¹ The Indian States' Problem, p. 48. See also Autobiography, pp. 343–4 and E. M. Forster, The Hill of Devi (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1953), pp. 157–8, where Forster notes that in 1921 "the disciplies of Gandhi used to alight [at Alot] and shout subversive slogans at us [in Dewas Sr., a Princely or Native State] over the border."

Mrs. Moore's Experience in The Marabar Caves: A Zen Buddhist Reading

VASANT A. SHAHANE

Mrs. Moore's experience in the Marabar Caves, what actually happened in the caves and how it affected her mind, and the implications of this momentous event—these issues are crucial to a deeper understanding of Forster's A Passage to India (1924). Although critics seem to agree that the Marabar visit and the temple ceremony are important events, yet their interpretations of what these events signify differ greatly depending on their critical approaches to the novel itself. Whether the Marabar in A Passage to India is a "mystery or a muddle"; whether Mrs. Moore in her mind suffers the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and dares "to take arms against a sea of troubles", or withdraws from the fray by resorting to nullity or negation and drops out "to die, to sleep", a "consummation devoutly to be wished"; or whether, alternatively, she goes under the "pale cast of thought" and has a profoundly disturbing religious experience: these are some of the crucial issues in the novel.

First, the strangeness of the Marabar Caves themselves, their role and function in the narrative, their effect upon the characters, and the placing of their entity, their significance or the lack of it, in the total novel—these are important questions to begin with. What do the caves signify? What do they, in fact, represent? Since they are described as "extraordinary," having uncanny meanings, several problems arise, issuing from the caves' existence, their role, and their effect on the novel's pattern and the way in which they modify or extend the fictional cosmos, the mood and the mind of characters, and the finale of *A Passage to India*.

The Marabar caves are only a fictional name for the Barabar Caves, which are actually situated near Gaya in Bihar, a state in North India. Forster recreates the environment in his own (or Mrs. Moore's) imagination, and the parent Himalayas are described as "older than anything in the world."

No water has ever covered them, and the sun who has watched them for countless aeons may still discern in their outlines forms that were his before our globe was torn from his bosom. If flesh of the sun's flesh is to be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills.²

Forster skillfully weaves the mountains and the caves into the fabric of his novel, heightening the effect of a recurrent, evergrowing mystery, an expanding elusiveness.

There is something unspeakable in these outposts. They are like nothing else in the world, and a glimpse of them makes the breath catch. They rise abruptly, insanely, without the proportion that is kept by the wildest hills elsewhere, they bear no relation to anything dreamt or seen. To call them "uncanny" suggests ghosts, and they are older than all spirit.³

These caves are admittedly "extraordinary" and beyond the reach of man's grasp and desire for attachment. Do they approximate to the Buddhist or the Hindu way of life symbolised by non-attachment?

Nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation—for they have one—does not depend upon human speech. It is as if the surrounding plain or the passing birds have taken upon themselves to exclaim "extraordinary", and the word has taken root in the air, and been inhaled by mankind.⁴

Do the caves represent the impersonal cosmic principle emerging out of non-attachment? Or, do they play a dual role? In the primitive state of man, caves functioned, or were used by him, in a dual way; they were his shelter and his tomb; men were born in them and were also buried in their corners. This primordial nature of the caves in relation to man signifies man's attempt to forge unity between the material and the spiritual, the fact of his mortality, a quest for life, and eventual death as a fact of life. The caves thus reinforce one of the principal themes of the novel, the barrier between oneness and separation, matter and essence.

Mrs. Moore's experience in the cave has been interpreted as negative, but in Indian philosophical thought an apparently negative approach (as shown in *Neti-Neti*) is only a prelude to spiritual awareness, a positive outlook to the world of the spirit.⁵

Mrs. Moore had earlier visualised the world as in quest of cosmic

unity, the unity of the earth and the moon, the Ganges and the stars. She had seen a beautiful reflection of the moon in the sacred waters of the Ganges, the holy river, and she wished to become one with the universe. But the fists and fingers of the Marabar caves bewildered her, and she experienced an echo which whispered into her ears: "everything exists, nothing has value," and her vision was then overwhelmed by a new nothingness.

This nothingness is at the heart of Mrs. Moore's experience in the

Marabar caves and their meaning in the novel's total design.

But suddenly at the end of her mind, Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from "Let there be Light" to "It is finished" only amounted to "boum." Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul, the mood of the last two months took definite form at last, and she realised that she didn't want to write to her children, didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God.⁶

Mrs. Moore's "Double Vision" emerges out of this particular extraordinary state—the middle state between heroic endeavour and the earthly enterprise. She had come to that state where the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time, the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people are involved. If this world is not to our taste, well, at all events there is Heaven, Hell, Annihilation, one or other of those large things, that huge scenic background of stars, fires, blue or black air.

All heroic endeavour and all that is known as art assumes that there is such background, just as all practical endeavour, when the world is to our taste assumes that the world is all. But in the twilight of the double vision, a spiritual muddledom is set up for which no high-sounding words can be found, we can neither act nor refrain from action, we can neither ignore nor respect Infinity.⁷

Everything in the cave produces "boum" signifying a kind of nullity or nothingness.

E. M. Forster had spoken to his interviewers, P. N. Furbank and F. J. H. Haskell, about the caves:

When I began A Passage to India I knew that something important happened in the Marabar caves, and that it would have a central place in the novel—but I didn't know what it would be.... The Marabar Caves represented an area in which concentration can take place. A cavity ... They were something to

focus everything up: they were to engender an event like an egg.8

The reference to "cavity" is significant and could be related to the concept of the Void or (in Sanskrit) *Sunyata*, which is one of the essential doctrines of Buddhism, more particularly of Zen.

Mrs. Moore's experience is, in part, deeply religious. She has a vision of the vast immensity of the Timeless Absolute which, in a way, the caves themselves signify. In consequence, the inherited values of her Christian faith—"poor little talkative Christianity"—are overwhelmed by this new insight, this new awareness of the Void. Mrs. Moore is up against the true nature of the self, her own self in particular, and the relationship of the self with the world in general. What she experiences in the caves is admittedly a complex issue; however, it seems to me that her experience should be related to what Forster describes as "cavity", or what Buddhism denotes as "Void". To the Mahayana (the Greater Vehicle) adherent of Buddhism, the Self is the basic Buddha-nature of which the rest of the world is only a manifestation, and he associates this search for the self with the concept of the Void or Sunyata.

"The Buddhist Void," says Nancy Ross, "is far from being a nihilistic doctrine." For a Buddhist, it is claimed as a proper after-death goal, as indeed it seems to be for Mrs. Moore. Nancy Ross continues:

The Void is not nothingness or annihilation but the very source of all life. In speaking of this theory as taught in the Buddhism of China and Japan (where it has influenced the creation of a very subtle aesthetic) Hajime Nakamura, the Japanese Buddhist scholar says: "Voidness . . . is . . . that which stands right in the middle between affirmation and negation, existence and non existence. . . . The void is all-inclusive, having no opposite, there is nothing which it excludes or opposes. It is living void, because all forms come out of it, and whoever realises the void is filled with life and power and the love of all beings. ⁹

Thus Forster's description of Mrs. Moore's experience in the caves amazingly confirms and reinforces Nakamura's explication of the Void. Mrs. Moore had come to what may be called the "middle state" between heroic endeavour and the earthly endeavour and to a "twilight of the double vision", and this position can be aptly related to the Zen Buddhist void—which "stands right in the middle between affirmation and negation, existence and non-existence." Whoever realises the depth of this void is filled with love for all men. This is precisely what happens in A Passage to India, when Professor Narayan Godbole is filled

with this overpowering love and when, in his heated state, he imaginatively recreates the image of Mrs. Moore. She "happened to occur among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found. Completeness, not reconstruction. His senses grew thinner, he remembered a wasp seen he forgot where, perhaps on a stone. He loved the wasp equally, he impelled it likewise, he was imitating God."¹⁰

Mrs. Moore's experience of the cavity in the caves is analogous to the Zen Buddhist experience of the void. Zen art, especially poetry, is deeply concerned with the awakening of the Formless Self. Zen awareness cannot be objectified; it is no longer an object; in fact, it is the subject. It is essentially "seeing into one's nature", which is precisely what Mrs. Moore and even Adela Quested attempt to achieve. The Formless Self leads the Zen seeker to an awareness of the void, and thus the void itself becomes a form of linguistic expression.

Forster, while describing Mrs. Moore's experience in the caves, says that "she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul" —and thus she was confronted with a cavity of meaninglessness. In fact, this "meaninglessness" is the essence of Zen; it is the only true Zen. Old Shoju's well-known poem articulates this sense of meaninglessness:

What "meaningless" Zen? Just look—at anything. 12

Mrs. Moore's mood of resignation to her fate, her disinclination to take any specific action, her loss of worldly interest, her unwillingness even to write to her children are close parallels to the elusive Taoist concept of Wu-Wei that is non-action, non-involvement, or non-attachment. Nancy Ross, while explaining this concept, stresses its central idea:

Taoism emphasized an elusive concept, wu-wei, nonaction, or better, noninvolvement, or perhaps more precisely, triumphing over one's insistent ego, letting things "happen" in accordance with their own innate laws instead of attempting to impose one's wishes as if they were the very laws of life. "Everything is what it is . . . is all one . . . the Tao," said Lao-tzu. 13 In dwelling on this abstraction, the Tao (which might be compared to the Buddhist Void, or even to Hinduism's Absolute, the indescribable essence of all life, Brahman), Lao-tzu wrote: "How unfathomable is Tao—like unto the emptiness of a vessel, yet, as it were, the honored Ancestor of us all. Using it we find it inexhaustible,

deep and unfathomable. How pure and still is the Way! I do not know who generated it. It may appear to have preceded God."14

However, it must be said that Zen awakening does not imply total withdrawal from the world. Nor does Mrs. Moore's mood imply total withdrawal from the world or total negation. In fact, her view of life at that moment is affected by non-attachment, which in its essence is not purely negative. On the contrary, it is the first positive step towards realising the true self, to join the human adventure, to spread universal love and harmony as Mrs. Moore actually does in the mind of Professor Godbole when he attempts to recreate her image.

The Marabar Caves and Mrs. Moore's experience in those extraordinary hollows reveal an aspect of the Oneness of the Absolute, the Void in Zen Buddhism, and the impersonal cosmic principle. The Caves are older than all spirit. Their great antiquity, their extraordinary quality affects even the rationalist Miss Adela Quested and for a time she feels that she is up against the inscrutable and that she is encountering an "inverted saucer". This image of the inverted saucer which cannot hold any matter is significant because it is analogous to the Zen Buddhist idea of void, of emptiness, which though apparently negative, is indeed at its depth a very positive doctrine. The great Bodhidharma's famous conversation with the Chinese Emperor unfolds his ideas on this emptiness that is central to Mrs. Moore's experience of the Marabar Caves:

As for the answer that "Vast Emptiness" was Buddhism's First Principle, he appears here to be simply stressing the doctrine of the nondualistic eternal Void from which all life emerges and which, in Zen terms, must be personally experienced in order to grasp life's true meaning and significance. This idea of emptiness is a receptive rather than a negative concept in Zen. A part of Zen training in its early stage stresses "Empty the mind." Sometimes the aspirant is advised to "take as thought the thought of No-thought". 15

In fact, this concept of "Emptiness" is the most central part of Zen teaching and it is also pervasively related to Zen art.

The Zen concept of Emptiness, already touched on in Bodhidharma's rather cheeky bit of dialogue with the Chinese Emperor, is one of the most important points to grasp about Zen teaching. The theme is rehearsed daily in an ancient morning chant of Zen monks that carries a curious suggestion of certain contemporary scientific views. "Form is here emptiness, emptiness is form; form is none other than emptiness; emptiness is none other than form; what is form that is emptiness, what is

emptiness that is form." The Zen teaching that Emptiness or the Void is in no way "lacking" but is, indeed, equal to fullness when properly understood has played a significant part in the development of certain important canons of Far Eastern art. 16

It is interesting to observe, for example, the role and function of "space" in Chinese and Japanese painting. Space is treated as a thing in itself, a positive value and not just a part of a mere arbitrary setting. It is indeed part of the painter's perspective. The vast spaces and immensities of the landscape of the Marabar caves only reinforce the Zen Buddhist concept of space.

Toshimitsu Hasumi's Zen in Japanese Art, while elucidating many of these art forms of Zen, attempts to articulate their aesthetic design.¹⁷ Kitaro Nishida, whose work on aesthetics forms the basis of Zen art, emphasises the synthesis of the views of art and experiences of life that endows Zen paintings with deep spiritual meanings. Thomas Merton has perceptively unfolded the basic principle of Zen aesthetics. He writes:

In particular, it is the function of the beautiful to be, so to speak, an epiphany of the Absolute and formless Void which is God. It is an embodiment of the Absolute mediated through the personality of the artist, or perhaps better his "spirit" and his contemplative experience.¹⁸

In attempting to unravel the mysteries of Mrs. Moore's experience in the Marabar caves, Forster is indeed trying to achieve and portray, in words and rhythm, an ephiphany of this Absolute and the complex "formless void." The experience is essentially non-verbal, and Forster in A Passage to India attempts to encase it in words of a deep evocative quality, which enhances the levels of profundity and complexity in the novel's total design.

Finally, my aim is to show that Mrs. Moore does not merely cave in under the impact of the Marabar Caves (as seems to be the general impression), but her experience touches deeper chords of her spiritual self. Forster attempts to articulate, by use of meaningful words, this essentially inarticulate experience in *A Passage to India*.

¹ I have traced the factual archaeological origins of the Marabar Caves in the library of the British Museum, and my findings have been published in *Notes and Queries*, 5 (Sept.–Dec. 1966), 3–4, 20–21, 36–67, 54–55.

² E. M. Forster, A Passage to India (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World,

¹⁹⁵²⁾ p. 123. All subsequent references are to this edition.

³ Ibid., p. 124.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Neti-Neti: literally, "Not-this, Not-this." The question is: what is, indeed,

Brahma? He is, says the Upanisadic doctrine, the God, the True, the Supreme joy. And yet, He is beyond words. Man tries to describe God's attributes, but he is finally compelled to confess: "Not-this. Not-this." *Neti* is a compound of *Na-iti*. Thus, Brahma and ultimate Reality are beyond words. This is apparently a negative mode of describing God.

⁶ Forster, A Passage to India, p. 150.

7 Ibid., p. 208.

⁸ P. N. Furbank and F. J. H. Haskell, "E. M. Forster," in *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews*, ed. Malcolm Cowley (New York: Viking, 1963), p. 27.

⁵ Nancy Wilson Ross, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen (London: Faber and Faber,

1973), p. 121.

10 Forster, A Passage to India, p. 286.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 150.

¹² Lucian Stryk, Takashi Ikemoto, Taigou Takayama, trans., Zen Poems of China and Japan: The Crane's Bill (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1973), p. xx. Old Shoju, or Shoju-rojut, is regarded as the most eminent Zen master of Japan and the spiritual mentor of Japanese Zen poetry. "Meaninglessness" is the essence of Zen; "it's the only true Zen"; the Moon is the real Zen and not the pointing finger of the poet directed towards it:

One look at plum blossoms Opened Reiun's eyes, Old Tan recites poems Is often in his cups Want "meaningless" Zen? Just look—at anything!

Shoju refers to Reiun as the great Chinese master of Zen and Old Tan is indeed Shoju's full name. The idea of "meaninglessness" is stressed in this poem as the essence of Zen.

13 Ross, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen, p. 140.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

15 Ibid., p. 154.

16 Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁷ Toshimitsu Hasumi, Zen in Japanese Art, trans. from the German by John Petrie (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Philosophical Library, 1962).

¹⁸ Thomas Merton, Zen and the Birds of Paradise (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 90.

The Remaking of the Past in Forster's Non-Fiction

JUDITH SCHERER HERZ

In a 1929 essay on Proust, Forster described Marcel at the end of *A la recherche du temps perdu:* "the hero starting out to be an author, rummaging in his past, disinterring forgotten facts, . . . that instant is the artist's instant; he must simultaneously recollect and create." Such a description applies with special force to Forster's own writing. For Forster was an archaeologist of the human experience; all his writing, fiction and non-fiction alike, constitutes an exploration, a recovery, and finally the creation of the past.

Forster was a memoirist in his fiction, a fiction maker in his memoirs. Or, to put the statement less symmetrically, to a significant degree, all of Forster's fiction constitutes a set of memoirs-meditations and transformations of his Cambridge days; of his travels in Greece and Italy, India and Alexandria; of his family memories, particularly of Rooksnest, the childhood house in Hertfordshire; and the passing generations in the Thornton house, Battersea Rise, in Clapham. Furthermore, much the same process of transforming experience that one observes in the novels occurs in the ostensibly non-fiction genres, the essays and biographies. The three biographies taken together, for example, come as close as anything he ever wrote to constituting the single autobiography that he was temperamentally incapable of writing, even of imagining writing.2 In the essays, too, the materials of others' lives are shaped to reflect his own. Both place and person become a focus for memory and creation, especially in those essays where the subject is not so much described as it is absorbed into a narrative in which object, image and idea fuse. In the following discussion, I will look at three examples of this process in an effort to identify that "artist's instant" when recollection and creation meet.

The very early essay, "Cnidus" (1904), provides an interesting example, for here, already formed, is that quality that we have come to identify as the Forsterian voice. It is at once precise and prophetic, full of the particulars of an expansive curiosity; it speaks through detail, through facts and data but with the sort of resonance that, if Forster were a seventeenth-century poet, we would call metaphysical. And like those seventeenth-century poets who charged the physical and immediate with the transcendent but kept their language colloquial and witty, Forster, too, never lost his comic poise and wit no matter how high his prose soared.

The voice at the start of the essay is causal and ironic; he could be writing a letter home about the odd habits of Greek sea captains, the late arrival at the island, the quantities of mud, the rain, the muddle, to say nothing of the raptures of those among them who "had discovered that the iron clamps were those used in classical times and that we were straining our ankles over masonry of the best period." But even in that paragraph another tone is present in the references to the "Hades of Aristophanes . . . [the] heavy dropping rain, such as befouls the limbo of Dante, . . . the silence that befits a city dead a thousand years" (p. 74).

Those two qualities of voice, the precise and the prophetic, inhabit the essay as two distinct but inseparable presences, the one ironic, comic, detached but ultimately social, the other private and meditative, capable of suggesting what is truly there by seeing what is not. At one moment he imagines that he "heard voices because all was so silent, and saw faces because it was too dark to see" (p. 171). But then suddenly he renounces such flights claiming that he will "confine [himself] . . . to facts" (p. 171), and follows with names and dates and details of geography and ironic allusions to the taste makers among contemporary writers on Greek art.

This duality of voice and vision resides at the very center of the essay in his description of the Cnidian Demeter. He can jest at the arrangements whereby we keep our goddesses in captivity, for at that very moment the Demeter was safe in her recess in the British Museum, dusted twice weekly and with a railing and a no-admittance sign before her. But on the other side of the jest lies invocation and prayer and suddenly Demeter herself emerges from the silence and the gloom, the goddess who "alone among Gods has true immortality," who has "transcended sex," the object of prayers "from suffering men as well as suffering women" (p. 172). But this epiphanic moment is, in fact, purely imaginary; that is, Forster has himself created what he

claims to see, for neither in the diary entry in which he first described the visit, nor in the notebook in which he shortly thereafter worked up that description as a first draft of the essay, is there any mention of Demeter at all.⁴ The essay is thus primarily a memoir of an imaginary moment, no matter how grounded it was in actuality. Demeter is a fiction that both permits and validates a real experience. Indeed she is a double fiction insofar as she goes on to inhabit nearly all his subsequent writing. She is a visible icon in *The Longest Journey* (the picture of Demeter in Stephen's room), and she is present, too, at the novel's close and at the close of *Maurice*, and in the mythic sub-structures of the Italian novels and of "Other Kingdom," and most potently of all, as the presiding mother deity of *A Passage to India*—Esmiss Esmoor.

The meditation that forms the center of "Cnidus" depends on an actual encounter with place; sometimes, though, the encounter can be purely imaginary, the past recollected as another's history is appropriated as one's own. The most complex and interesting example of this occurs in the 1931 essay, "A Letter to Madan Blanchard." Here Forster as historian discovers in his reading an unlettered eighteenthcentury sailor, a figure in the memoirs of a Captain Henry Wilson, who remains in the Pelew Islands when Wilson and the rest of the crew of the shipwrecked "Antelope" return to England. Using the real memoirs of Captain Wilson, Forster creates a fictive encounter between his present self and that dimly perceived but, to Forster, psychologically real and immensely touching alter ego, the sailor who "jibbed," who one day did the unexpected, who by going native seems to the twentieth-century Forster in possession of some wisdom, some truth he would desperately like to possess. The process of getting that truth is complexly ironic. As he writes in the London Library in 1931 to a recipient who cannot read, he must dissolve one hundred and fifty years of real time. He runs it backwards as he imagines his letter slowing down in its temporal regression—by air mail to Paris, but then as it moves from Paris to Genoa to Egypt to India to Macao, it goes by ever slower overland routes and smaller ships until "just one tiny ripple survives to float my envelope into your hand."6

Blanchard "went native," and Forster wants to know why. "I want to know why you stopped behind when the others went" (p. 306). Behind that question there are others: let me know how you are, have you gone off into darkness, or "into what I can't help calling life?" (p. 310). There is the writer seated in the library, "stuffed in between books and old ladies with worried faces making notes" (p. 310), but in his imagination cut loose from all civilizations and constraints, where

books don't exist (nor ladies either). But while he is in the one place he is also in the other. Reading of Blanchard he wonders why he is so set about by rules, why he can't keep his hat on in church even when no one's looking, why he never manages to hit below the belt. It is precisely this sense of himself as one who never jibbed that gives such power to his conjuring of Blanchard out of the darkness of time. And that is why he studies history, he writes, to meet "in the flesh" those who "managed better" than he, "the people who carried whimsicality into action, the salt of my earth . . . the solid fellows who suddenly jib" (p. 312).

Thus the essay-letter becomes a memoir of an event whose historical truth yields a psychological truth by means of a fictional representation. Using Wilson he can deflect his own voice through his scholarly sources, but his scholarship is itself partly a fiction, for he fabricates as much as he quotes and paraphrases. The Madan Blanchard of history is, in fact, lost to history—"what about your own relatives? I don't even know whether you're French or English." Thus it is the Blanchard of fiction who carries the Whitmanic affirmation of the historical meditation to its close. It is precisely the sort of reply that an unlettered sailor could produce, as it is the only response that the many-lettered writer would want to receive. It contains a single word, a single letter, indeed a single sound signing its own meaning, "'aaa' (Pelew for Yes)."

For Forster the past was both personal and public, to be recreated by way of constituting an individual present. The most intricate example of this is Pharos and Pharillon (1923), Forster's Paterian memoir of his three years in Alexandria during World War I.7 That city presented countless paradoxes to Forster's own paradoxical sensibility as he explored her past in his roles of tourist, Red Cross worker, lover, reader, historian, guide, novelist and friend. For if her past was infinitely more interesting than her somewhat dull and prosperous present, Forster's personal present, under the influence of what he later described as "the slow Levantine dégringolade"8 was an exciting, transforming moment in his life. His "parting with respectability," his love for Mohammed el Adl, and his friendship with the poet, Cavafy, made him feel particularly attuned to this "civilization of ecclecticism and exiles." 10 Moreover, Alexandria was the city of romance, of Alexander's love for Hephaestion and of Antony's and Cleopatra's. And while "nothing of the Alexandria they knew survives, except sea, sand and little birds,"11 the twitter of those birds at a modern concert could bridge the millennia for Forster, opening an access to the past by which he could both discover and interpret his present.

Pharos and Pharillon is, like "A Letter to Madan Blanchard," a generic hybrid—in part journalism, historical sketch, short story and essay. In it, the Alexandria of his experience, the Alexandria of his intellectual inquiry, and the Alexandria of his imagination fuse first in the portrait of a city understood through her history, then in the portrait of the poet Cavafy who epitomizes both that past and present and whose poetry is itself largely a meditation on history. Just out of focus, but still a felt presence, is the writer, like his hero Cavafy, "motionless at a slight angle to the universe."

This "book about Alexandria," as the dust jacket originally described it, is clearly a public text, but it is infused with private recollection. Behind the historian's reconstruction of the past beckons the figure of Hermes, first met in the dedication as "Hermes Psychopompos," conductor of souls, and again in the concluding pageant where he is seen leading the shades to the asphodel. Hermes, however, has another name, that of Forster's dead friend, Mohammed el Adl, the entire text an offering to his memory, indeed the result of his memory: "I have written a story because of you and dedicated a book to you."14 The story was "The Life to Come"; the book, Pharos and Pharillon, its dedication—"two words in Greek that fit book and him extraordinarily well."15 The individual chapters, first published as articles in The Egyptian Mail, were, in fact, written well before Mohammed's death, but they are provided with a retrospective coherence by the presence of Mohammed/Hermes as he frames Forster's descent into the past and reëmergence into his own present. The controlling metaphors of sequence impose unity as well, time as measured by the subsiding of the sea, by the forming of the delta of the Nile, images of yearly repetition, "the quiet persistence of the earth." "Everything passes," he states at the close, and then the qualification that allows for his own witness, "or almost everything" (p. 98).

It is in that space that the pageant of *Pharos and Pharillon* unfolds. There is first the history of the lighthouse, one of the ancient wonders of the world, and of those lesser structures that followed, one of which was Pharillon, which finally "slid unobserved into the Mediterranean" (p. 10). Then follows a set of historical portraits—a world conqueror, several church fathers, a few emperors—and a poem. The poem is Cavafy's "The God Abandons Antony," and by its tone of stoic elegy it links the two sections. It is appropriate both to those distant shades that make their appearance in "Pharos," and to the modern city depicted in "Pharillon," which, unlike its predecessors, "calls for no enthusiastic comment" (p. 98). Indeed the modern city is very lightly sketched.

Approached through an eighteenth-century account, it is seen in two quick vignettes, whose somewhat desultory quality, amusing but inconsequential, bears out that lack of enthusiasm. Only the city as a palimpsest of maps, of streets whose names recall other names and whose present dull gentility can be dismissed by a willed vision of its "vanished glory," excites the imagination.¹⁶

For it is the city of the past that Forster is intent on recovering. His own itineraries are important chiefly as they trace the footsteps of those past inhabitants whose portraits he is drawing. His is a form of history writing akin to poetry; indeed, as has been frequently argued, all attempts to organize "events, whether imaginary or real, into a comprehensible totality . . . is a poetic process."17 And this is strikingly so in Forster's case, for whom the instinct for pattern and for the metaphor which is at once tenor and vehicle, is manifest in a language notable for its density of implication and allusion. Of course, fiction is meant as the inclusive category in the reference to the "poetic process"; that is, the historian by the very act of ordering his materials (or even choosing them), creates something that never existed before. The more complete this fictional process, the greater seems its claim to a prior reality. What gives this fictive reality to Pharos and Pharillon, however, is not simply the result of a novelistic illusion of the real, but is a function of the fundamental relationship of Forster to his materials. For Forster the study of history was an act of self scrutiny. He encountered his subjects as intimates, testing the degree to which he and they were like or unlike, entering their controversies to find the human link between himself and them.18 It is a point of view in which history is always other and self. Identifying this double focus is essential to understanding the role Forster cast for himself as Alexandria's historian.

Such a point of view is nowhere more clearly visible than in the opening essay, "The Return from Siwa," the account of Alexander at the moment when "his aspirations alter," when he ceases to "regard Greece as the centre of his world" (p. 26). Forster was always moved by the heroic follower of instinct even as he was well aware of the dangers. This combination of attraction and uneasiness is conveyed rhetorically as well, insofar as irony is allowed almost to undercut the prophetic voice. Nonetheless, the imagination at work here, for all its vividness, is less that of a novelist than of a moralist bent on discovering the origins of a kind of human consciousness. Thus the attempt to imagine the colossus that was Alexander is left as a series of unanswered questions: "Was the universe friendly?" What did the priest mean when he called Alexander "son of God?" Or, finally, "when at the age of thirty-three

he died, when the expedition that he did not seek stole towards him in the summer house at Babylon, did it seem to him as after all but the crown of his smaller quests?" (p. 27) Landscape is also moralised, for the scenes he imagines are both singular and exemplary as they participate in a time scheme at once local and epic. The singular act, "riding with a few friends into the western desert," occurs in the same sentence in which the nations Alexander conquered pile up in the subordinate clause. But it is also a landscape that has withstood the millennia and is thus as much his as it was Alexander's. It was once, it has always been: "Around him little flat pebbles shimmered and danced in the heat, gazelles stared, and pieces of sky sloped into the sand" (p. 25).

Theology, however, more than heroism, is the chief subject of "Pharos." Forster enters the controversies of the early church as a non-believing Arian, a chronicler of the disappearance of tolerance and graciousness as the church grew rigid and absorbed in its own "dance of theology." The dominant note here is elegiac, a tone that is echoed in the Cavafy poem that Forster prints as the bridge between the Alexandria of history and the Alexandria of his own experience. It sounds in the second section as well, although there it is more implicit, most audible toward the end.

In all the "Pharillon" chapters except for the somewhat comic opening one, Forster is the chief actor, but he is, in fact, far less present in them than he was in the Pharos meditations. Taken together, these later chapters constitute a set of ironic footnotes to the sweep of history in "Pharos": the eighteenth-century traveler, Eliza Fay, scaled down from Alexander; or a comic visit to a hashish den where there was disappointingly little evidence of the drug. The essays touch on a few characteristic activities—the cotton exchange, cotton manufacture, the hashish den. They describe some streets and landscapes, but they clearly suggest that the glories of the past have vanished. Even the asphodel that grows in the Mariout country early in March is a coarse, harsh plant, a disappointment to those "who dreamt of the Elysian fields, . . . too heavy for the hands of ghosts, too harsh for their feet" (p. 88).

The present, the "Pharillon" essays suggest, is too solid, uninteresting. Except . . ., and suddenly Cavafy looms over the scene, the elegant, infinitely civilized poet of Alexandria's past and present. As Forster evokes his voice, we realize how familiar it has already become to us. Cavafy's conversation, for example, ranged rapidly from the tricky behaviour of an emperor in 1096, to olives, friends, George Eliot, dialects and language. The catalogue of subjects reads like the table of

contents to *Pharos and Pharillon* itself. And Cavafy's literary voice was of equal importance for Forster in its suggestive blending of the ironic and the erotic. Both in his choice of subject matter and in the way he modulated voice and stance he offered Forster a revised and probably more durable form of Hellenism than the nostalgic, idealised Hellenism of *The Longest Journey* and *Maurice*¹⁹ (more durable because, to borrow Donne's words, it could "endure vicissitude and season, like the grass").

Thus encouraged by Cavafy (and also by Edward Carpenter—they corresponded throughout this period),²⁰ Forster translated Whitmanic metaphor into Whitmanic action. As a hospital searcher for the Red Cross, he was, like Whitman a half century earlier, in constant attendance on death. In this way he joins Mohammed in the figure of Hermes, but another mythic figure opens and closes the book as well; he is Menelaos, leader of the solid cotton brokers in the concluding pageant. If Forster is Hermes, he is also Menelaos, bureaucrat, official, a member of the best society, just as, seated in the London Library, he is both the civilized twentieth-century writer and the eighteenth-century sailor freed from all restraints. It is from this double perspective that he surveys the past, turning history into fiction (and fiction into history, for many of his totally imaginary accounts, one feels, must have happened precisely as he described them).

But the past constantly escapes, and the more we fix it in words the more it escapes irrevocably into fiction. This is as true for the chronicling of the largest public events as it is for the recalling of the most private. It is, I suggest, in such terms as these that the fictional status of all reconstructions of the past must be understood. As Forster wrote in the "letter" to Mohammed some months after the news of his death had reached him, "I write for my own comfort and to recall the past." But try as he might, he wrote, "to keep this real, my own words get in the way." That sentence sums up the problem perfectly, the collision of the real, the factual, with the words that at once render it fiction.

^{1 &}quot;Proust," Abinger Harvest (London: Edward Arnold, 1936), p. 98.

² I develop this point in "Forster's Three Experiments in Autobiographical Biography," *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 13 (1980), 51–68.

³ "Cnidus," Abinger Harvest, p. 170.

⁴ Both the notebook and the diary are among the Forster papers in King's College, Cambridge. All citations from unpublished material are made with the permission of the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge, and cited as KCC.

⁵ See S. P. Rosenbaum, "Bloomsbury Letters," *Centrum* New Series 1 (1981), 113–119 for a discussion of this essay in terms of the mixing of "fiction and non-fiction . . . in both the public and private letters of Bloomsbury."

6 "A Letter to Madan Blanchard," Two Cheers for Democracy (London: Ed-

ward Arnold, Abinger Edition Vol. 11, 1972 [1951]), p. 305.

⁷ See Robert K. Martin, "The Paterian Mode in Forster's Fiction," E. M. Forster: Centenary Revaluations, ed. J. S. Herz and R. K. Martin (London: The Macmillan Press, 1982), pp. 99–112.

⁸ The phrase occurs in a memoir-lecture given at Aldeburgh (n. d.). KCC:

catalogued as "The Lost Guide."

- ⁹ "Yesterday for the first time in my life I parted with respectability," in letter to Florence Barger, 16 October, 1916, in *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), I, 243.
- ¹⁰ He used the phrase in one of his Egyptian Mail articles, 21 October, 1917. KCC.
 - 11 "Sunday Music," Egyptian Mail, 2 September 1917. KCC.
- ¹² See Jane Lagoudis Pinchin, Alexandria Still: Forster, Cavafy and Durrell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), especially chapters two and three where she shows how Cavafy and Forster in their evocation of the past "see the irony that is the distance of . . . [another's] vision and ours. A moment in time and space. History as fiction" (p. 126).

¹³ Pharos and Pharillon (London: The Hogarth Press, 1923), p. 91.

¹⁴ "The Letter-Book": "To Mohammed el Adl: who died at Mansourah shortly after the 8th of May, 1922...." The small fawn-colored notebook was used for a meditative letter-diary that Forster wrote in over several years. It was begun 5 August 1922; the last entry is dated 27 December 1929. KCC.

15 Letter to Florence Barger, 7 July 1922. KCC.

¹⁶ Whereas Forster used all the published historical sketches for "Pharos," he severely limited the contemporary sketches for "Pharillon," omitting three of the best—all on music—whose inclusion would have disturbed the balance of the final text.

¹⁷ Hayden White, "Fictions of Factual Representation," *The Literature of Fact*, ed. Angus Fletcher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 28. See also *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press,

1978), p. 125.

¹⁸ In a 1942 entry in his *Commonplace Book*, Forster is still "reading" the past in these terms. He transcribed passages from Augustine, Pelagius, Jerome in an attempt to find causes for the fall of Rome within the context of the possible fall of Europe, but he always returned to the personal: "Pelagius = Morgan I am glad to say" (both names derive from a word meaning "sea"), or "now farewell St. Jerome forever, but I must not ignore some similarities between us." *Commonplace Book*, Facsimile edition (London: Scolar Press, 1978), pp. 141, 144.

¹⁹ See G. D. Klingopulos, "E. M. Forster's Sense of History: And Cavafy," *Essays in Criticism*, 8 (1958), 156–165, who argued that the hellenism of the earlier novels "was a nostalgia for blessed simplicity," whereas that "of the later

Forster implied a recognition of complexity." He sees Cavafy as the critical factor in this shift, but, unfortunately, to sustain his argument he seriously underrates the earlier fiction.

²⁰ See Robert K. Martin, "Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of Maurice," Journal of Homosexuality, 8 (1983), 35–46, for a discussion of Carpenter's importance for Forster.

²¹ See footnote 14.

"We Have Ventured to Tidy up Vere": The Adapters' Dialogue in Billy Budd

JOE K. LAW

An opera based upon a well-known literary work will inevitably be judged upon its fidelity to its source. Audiences tend to note what has been omitted or altered and to decry such changes as loss or as sacrilege. The outcry is louder in proportion to the familiarity and esteem of the literary work on which the opera draws. The German practice of distinguishing Goethe's *Faust* from Gounod's opera by renaming the latter *Margarethe*, and Vladimir Nabokov's dismissal of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* as a "silly" and "slapdash" insult to Pushkin's masterpiece, illustrate this tendency. To judge a "literary" opera on this basis alone, however, is to deny that opera its autonomy. E. M. Forster came to terms with this problem when he became acquainted with Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, an opera diverging considerably from its source in the poetry of George Crabbe:

The first time I heard it, this worried me rather. I knew the poem well, and I missed its horizontality, its mud. I was puzzled at being asked by Grimes to lift up my eyes to the stars. At the second hearing my difficulty disappeared, and I accepted the opera as an independent masterpiece, with a life of its own.²

Following these remarks, made in the course of a lecture at the 1948 Aldeburgh Festival, Forster learned at first hand the difficulties of giving independent life to a libretto based upon a well-known literary work. After Britten invited Forster to collaborate on an opera, they chose Melville's "Billy Budd" as their subject and, because Forster was reluctant to undertake the work alone, enlisted the aid of Eric

Crozier, who had already produced Britten's *Peter Grimes* and *The Rape of Lucretia* and had provided the libretti for his *Albert Herring* and *The Little Sweep*.³ The collaboration well under way, Forster reported their progress in a letter to Lionel Trilling on 16 April 1949. "Claggart came easy," he wrote. "And Billy himself caused much less trouble than I expected." The chief difficulty lay elsewhere: "The rescuing of Vere from his creator [was] no small problem." Two years later, the libretto completed, Forster was more explicit about these difficulties in a letter he wrote for *The Griffin* in September 1951:

But I . . . think that Melville got muddled and that, particularly in the trial scene his respect for authority and discipline deflected him. How odiously Vere comes out in the trial scene! At first he stays in the witness-box, as he should, then he constitutes himself both counsel for the prosecution and judge, and never stops lecturing the court until the boy is sentenced to death. "Struck by an angel of God: and I must make sure that the angel hangs." It comes to that. "I take him to be of that generous nature that he would even feel for us." It comes to that too, and in those words. His unseemly harrangue arises, I think, from Melville's wavering attitude towards an impeccable commander, a superior philosopher, and a British aristocrat.⁵

Forster concluded the letter with a comment minimizing the changes from the novella to the libretto: "We (Eric Crozier and myself) . . . have ventured to tidy up Vere. Adapters have to tidy. Creators needn't and sometimes shouldn't."

Adapting of the sort that Forster refers to is never merely tidying. Even when one grants the opera autonomy, the original work remains stubbornly present in the minds of the audience. The comparison of the opera and its source is inevitable. Rather than automatically decrying the changes or trying to dismiss the original, however, it is more rewarding to regard the adaptation as a dialogue or even a contention with the original work.7 Such a dialogue or dispute, of course, invites the audience to respond. The most surprising feature of the dialogue between "Billy Budd" and Billy Budd, however, is the failure of audiences and critics alike to respond to that invitation to participate. Commentators may note that Britten and his two librettists have departed occasionally from their text, but no one has really examined the extent to which the opera contends with Melville's text.8 At the center of this contention is Captain Vere, whose role in the opera differs radically from his role in the novella. Because he is the narrator of the operatic events, any divergence from the familiar events of the novella may arguably be attributed to Vere's telling of the story. Viewed in this way, Vere's silence at Billy's court-martial (the single radical change in events between novella and opera) takes on a new importance when the audience compares the operatic Vere's silence with the novelistic Vere's arguments for conviction. From this comparison emerges a new understanding of the nature of Vere's decision, the difficulty of which the opera makes clearer than the novella.

It is in many ways understandable that most commentators on Billy Budd discuss the similarities of the novella and the opera rather than the differences. Eric Crozier has pointed out that the collaboration on Billy Budd "was governed from first to last by respect for Melville and the desire to interpret him faithfully."9 That faithfulness (apart from Vere's silence at the trial) is not confined to the story line but extends even to the use of many phrases directly from Melville's text. Eric Walter White has noted some of these borrowings, among them the phrases "Handsomely done, my lad,/And handsome is as handsome did it too," "Jemmy Legs is down on you," "A man-trap may be under his ruddy-tipped daisies," "Fated boy, what have you done," and "Struck by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang." In addition, White also shows that Billy's statement about the Chaplain's having been to see him with the "story of the good boy hung and gone to glory, hung for the likes of me" comes from a discarded fragment of "Billy in the Darbies."10

When the librettists do depart from Melville's text, it is often because their new medium demands the dramatic presentation of Melville's long stretches of expository prose. These departures remain faithful to the spirit of the work. In the novella, for example, readers are told of Billy's stammer as he is being impressed, but that stammer does not actually occur until the afterguardsman tempts Billy to mutiny. In the opera that stammer occurs at Billy's impressment as he is being questioned about his origins. The onstage events, together with the Sailing Master's comment on the flawed nature of the recruits, makes Melville's own point economically by altering his sequence of events.

In the same scene, another deviation occurs when Billy calls his farewell to *The Rights of Man*. In Melville's text, the Lieutenant reprimands him sharply, thinking it a satirical slur on Billy's part, but he is more amused than alarmed. In the opera, however, the three officers clear the deck at Billy's shouted farewell. Here it is Vere who recognizes that nothing more than youthful high spirits motivated Billy's cry, and, in the following scene, he reassures his officers in phrases reminiscent of Melville's own exposition of the incident. Not only does the

in the same work.

change maintain the integrity of the original, but it also helps the audience to recognize Vere's superior intelligence in this, his first appearance after the Prologue.¹¹

Some of the events of the novella that seem to have been omitted in the libretto are actually suggested in a compressed fashion. The important soup-spilling episode provides the most significant instance of this treatment. Even though the episode does not appear in the action, it is alluded to in Claggart's directions to Squeak ("Splash his soup"). For the incident itself, the librettists have substituted a fight between Billy and Squeak, probably based upon the fight in the novella between Billy and Red Whiskers aboard *The Rights of Man*. The operatic fight, like the soup-spilling in the novella, concludes with Claggart's "Handsomely done," followed by a vicious slash with his rattan at the boy who stumbles against him.

In addition to this evidence of care for Melville's plot and even his words in "Birly Budd" are the signs of the librettists' attention to others of Melville's works. Surely, for example, the First Lieutenant, Mr. Redburn, takes his name from Melville's *Redburn*. The words of the First Mate that open Act I, Scene I, recall the exhortations of Stubb in the whaling boat in *Moby-Dick*, just as the phrase "lost on the infinite sea," sung by Captain Vere, recalls Ishmael's "infinite series of the sea"

In the face of this obvious respect for the words and deeds of Melville's work, extending as it does even beyond "Billy Budd," three changes in the opera, all connected with Vere, stand out in high relief: he lives to an old age rather than dying in battle soon after Billy's hanging; the framing Prologue and Epiloque make him the narrator of the events which comprise the opera itself; and he remains silent during Billy's trial instead of urging his officers to convict Billy.

Taken in isolation, the first of these changes is not especially striking. The alterations seem to be only external ones of time and place. It may be, as White has suggested, that the elderly Vere is meant to parallel the elderly Melville, struggling with the creation of "Billy Budd." Or, for that matter, Vere may also suggest the septuagenarian Forster, who had some fears that he might not see the work completed. Forster's only comment on this change seems to be a note on the first draft of Vere's Prologue: "N.B. in the story Vere dies soon after. But had better live on." In both the novella and the opera, Vere's attitude in facing death remains the same. Melville's Vere dies with Billy's name on his lips, and it is clear to his attendants that his words are "not the accents of remorse." In the Epilogue it is equally

clear that the operatic Vere is approaching death as he thinks about Billy Budd and that Billy's blessing has replaced any remorse with contentment and peace. The opera opens, however, with the accents of remorse, as Vere tries to recall the events that will answer his agonized question, "What have I done?" The opera proper represents Vere's own recollections in answer to that question. Something in his response to these memories changes his remorseful questions to calm certainty. Vere and his transformed response lie at the heart of the opera Billy Budd.

Forster himself seems not to have recognized the new centrality of Vere in the operatic version. In both his letter to *The Griffin* and a BBC broadcast of 1960, he identified Billy as the central character. In the broadcast, however, the composer pointed to Vere as the most interesting character and to Vere's dilemma as the central issue of the work. Even these comments, however, do not take into account the extent to which Vere's is the central consciousness of the opera. The novella has an anonymous narrator who takes no part in the events, but who sees into the minds of the characters and speculates at length upon their motives. In *Billy Budd*, however, the composer's favorite framing device of a prologue and epilogue represents Vere as calling up the action of the opera; thus Vere is its narrator, and all the audience sees and hears is shaped and colored by his consciousness.

Vere's centrality was noted by several commentators on the first performances. In his analysis of the score, Erwin Stein twice reminded his readers that events are seen through Vere's eyes. The producer and designer for the first performances were also well aware of this centrality and took pains to make it clear to the audience. In a conversation published in *Tempo*, Basil Coleman pointed out that the descending mist in Act III, Scene 1 (Act II, Scene 1 in the revised version of the opera), was as much "a mist of doubt and fear in the mind of Vere when he is about to close with Claggart" as an actual mist cutting off the *Indomitable* from the French ship. John Piper's response was to comment that "we must never lose sight of the fact that the whole thing is taking place in Vere's mind, and is being recalled by him." Both men were particularly concerned with making this clear in the staging of the Prologue and Epilogue. 16

Supporting this conviction of analyst, designer, and producer is abundant evidence, both verbal and musical, of Vere's shaping intelligence throughout the work. The verbal evidence consists of a pattern of repeated phrases originating in the Prologue and extending through the entire opera. This repetition suggests not only the continuing

presence of Vere's own thoughts in the events he narrates, but, as those phrases are transferred from one character to another, they suggest Vere's continuing attempt to assess his own role in relation to those characters and to evaluate his part in the events. In establishing that pattern, the following phrases in the Prologue are especially important: "I have also read books and studied and pondered and tried to fathom eternal truth," "There is always some flaw in it [goodness]," and "I have tried to guide others rightly, but I have been lost on the infinite sea."

The first repetition of one of these phrases occurs as the Sailing Master hears the newly impressed Billy's stammer: "There is always some flaw in them," he sings, nearly duplicating Vere's words in the Prologue. Vere's identification earlier of the flaw as "some stammer in the divine speech" makes the connection still clearer. Before his exit with the similar phrase, "always some defect," the Sailing Master adds a phrase of his own that will be of increasing importance: "We must be content with them," he sings of the new recruits. His comment is repeated with all three seamen, and a related idea will be expressed later in the opera, first by Billy and then by the Captain. The impressment scene closes with another phrase recalling the Prologue. Claggart, left alone on stage, expresses his resentment at being ordered about by his superior officers: "Have I never studied man and men's weaknesses?" Here Claggart's words are an ironic echo of Vere's study of books and his search for eternal truth rather than a direct restatement of the Captain's words, but the parallel established between the two men is clear. Both are close observers of mankind. That parallel is later strengthened in Act II. There, after Claggart has denounced Billy to the Captain, Vere comments, "I've studied men and their ways."

Following the impressment, the balance of Act I, Scene 1, contains two other instances of this pattern of connected phrases. The first occurs as the sailors try to comfort the Novice, who has just been flogged. The sailors sing, "Ay, he's lost for ever on the endless sea. . . . Ay, he's heart-broken; we're all broken"; later they add, "We're all of us lost on the endless sea," this last phrase repeated many times in the course of their ensemble. Once again the words come directly from the Prologue, with only the substitution of "endless" for "infinite." In this repetition is set forth the common dilemma of the Novice, his fellow sailors, and Vere. At the conclusion of Act I, Scene 1, the seamen sing of their devotion to Vere and their reliance on him: "We'll follow Vere, . . . Starry, show us the way." These words, of course, recall Vere's opening comment about his attempts to guide others, but there is more. Billy takes up the song with the others, soon adding these words:

"I'd die to save you, ask for to die." While Billy's words join those expressing the Captain's dilemma of being responsible for guiding while being as lost as his men, those words also contain the solution to that dilemma in Billy's willingness to die for him.

Billy is also involved in the second instance of repetition, which closes Act I. There Billy sings of his life aboard the *Indomitable*, "O, I'm content, I'm content!" These words, which he repeats, echo the repeated words of the Sailing Master in the first scene. Billy has taken possession of these words from the grumbling officer, and he will repeat them in Act II as he learns that he is not be promoted and, more significantly, as he faces death. In the Epilogue, the phrase will be transferred to Captain Vere.

Before that transfer can take place, however, Claggart's design against Billy must be worked out. Claggart's study of men and their weaknesses had already linked him with Vere in the first scene, and his important monologue (Act I, Scene 2) seems to function in a manner analogous to Vere's Prologue. It, too, introduces a set of phrases which resonate throughout the remainder of the opera. The key phrases here are "O beauty, o handsomeness, goodness," "what choice remains to me?" and "this tiny floating fragment of earth," this last a phrase reminiscent of Vere's "planet of earth" in the Prologue. In the monologue Claggart reveals his design to destroy Billy, a design that dominates both his thoughts and the action of the balance of the opera. It is appropriate, then, that his words emerge more and more prominently in the pattern of repeated phrases, particularly as Vere increasingly identifies himself as Claggart's agent.

Before that identification can take place completely, though, another of Claggart's agents appears and repeats one of Claggart's phrases. Immediately after the monologue, the Novice, forced to betray Billy, twice sings, "I've no choice." It is important to recall that the Novice is the character who had earlier been said to be lost "on the endless sea" and thus linked with Vere. His helplessness in carrying out Claggart's demands foreshadows Vere's own position later in the opera. This connection is especially clear in Act II, following Claggart's death. Before he summons the drumhead court, Vere sings of his new understanding of the situation: "Beauty, handsomeness, goodness coming to trial. How can I condemn him? How can I save him? My heart's broken, my life's broken." Claggart's description of the principle embodied in Billy is joined in Vere's statement of helplessness to the phrase that described the broken-hearted Novice and his broken fellow sailors in Act I. This helplessness also informs the actions of the trio of

officers who convict Billy: "We've no choice," they sing many times before delivering their verdict. As this repetition shows, Novice, Captain, and officers are equally powerless to avoid carrying out Claggart's plan.

It is in Captain Vere's final soliloquy that Claggart's words are most substantially recalled and the connection between the Captain and the Master-at-Arms made clearest. Here, in the capacity of the "king of this fragment of earth, of this floating monarchy," the Captain accepts the verdict of the court-martial. These words recall Claggart's description of the ship as a "tiny floating fragment of earth," but the final lines of the soliloguy are still more telling: "Beauty, handsomeness, goodness, it is for me to destroy you. I, Edward Fairfax Vere, Captain of the Indomitable, lost with all hands on the infinite sea." One need only compare the conclusion of Claggart's monologue, thrice addressed to beauty, handsomeness, and goodness: "I, John Claggart, Master-at-Arms upon the Indomitable, have you in my power, and I will destroy you." In both instances each man identifies himself fully and announces the destruction of the identical quality. The connections between the two seem even clearer when one recalls that Vere introduces himself in much the same manner in the Prologue and repeats the identification in the Epilogue. He has recognized the extent to which he is involved in the destruction of Billy Budd, and his repetitions reflect this recognition.

Following Vere's soliloguy another transference of a phrase from one character to another begins to take place, suggesting still another insight as Vere looks back on events. Up to this point the repetitions have suggested Vere's growing awareness that Claggart was a man of keen intellectual penetration (not unlike himself) and that (like the Novice, the weakest of his crew) Vere has been the helpless agent of Claggart. Now he begins to contemplate the "mystery of goodness" he has witnessed. As Vere looks at his part in these events, he is afraid. He must destroy goodness, and he poses questions about the outcome for himself. Before what tribunal will he stand? How will Billy receive and pardon him? The answers to these questions are delayed and with them the identification with another character that will solve Vere's dilemma. Following the sequence of chords presenting the final interview between Billy and the Captain and the setting of "Billy in the Darbies" comes Billy's assessment of the events as he parts with Dansker. He and the Captain are alike in their predicaments: Billy had to strike down the Master-at-Arms, and the Captain must, in turn, strike him down. They both need strength, he says, but he will not be able to help the Captain much longer. The sense of identification between Billy and the Captain becomes even stronger after Dansker leaves. Alone, Billy sings his final farewell to life:

But I've sighted a sail in the storm, the far-shining sail that's not Fate, and I'm contented. I've seen where she's bound for. She has a land of her own where she'll anchor for ever. Oh, I'm contented. Don't matter now being hanged.... I'm strong, and I know it, and I'll stay strong, and that's all, and that's enough.

At the center of Billy's strength and certainty in the face of death is his contentment with his lot, his words recalling his earlier satisfaction with serving in whatever capacity Vere assigns him.

In the Epilogue many of Billy's words return as Vere accepts Billy's blessing and, with it, his contentment and strength. The Captain's words show that he has finally discarded his sense of being lost and of being Claggart's helpless agent. Billy has redeemed him, and his appropriation of Billy's words shows that he has at last recognized and accepted that redemption.

Corresponding to this verbal pattern is a patter of unifying musical devices that originates in Vere's Prologue or becomes closely associated with his dilemma during the course of the work. Several writers on the opera, principally Erwin Stein, Eric Walter White, John Warrack, and Peter Evans, have traced harmonic and motivic development within the opera. They all point to the clash between B-flat major and B minor that opens the opera and that, in various forms, underlies the rest of the work. This clash White associates with the opposition of Billy's innocence and Claggart's depravity and with Claggart's hatred of the young sailor.17 Among the instances of this opposing semitone identified by White are the initial arias of these two characters: Billy's "Billy Budd, king of the birds," begins in E major, while Claggart's "Was I born yesterday?" opens in F minor. 18 This harmonic struggle continues throughout the opera, to be resolved (as it began) with Captain Vere. At the end of the Epilogue a phrase associated with Claggart but transformed into the fanfare associated with Billy appears in B; at the same time, a phrase from Billy's farewell appears in A. Both are set against B-flat in the Captain's vocal line. When the resolution to B-flat occurs, it has, as White points out, the impact and finality of a double resolution. 19

Together with this unifying harmonic scheme, another musical feature appears consistently throughout the work: a repeated motive of a fifth followed by a semitone. White traces its progress from its first appearance as Vere sings "O what have I done?" in the Prologue; it is

soon repeated as the sailors sing "O heave away" at the opening of Act I, returns as Billy sings his farewell to *The Rights of Man*, recurs at the words "the floating republic" as the Sailing Master sings of mutinies, appears in the orchestra as the Novice tries to bribe Billy, comprises the skeleton of Claggart's accusation, forms the subject of the wordless fugal stretto following Billy's hanging, and returns for the last time as Vere repeats his opening question in the Epilogue. This motive White associates principally with mutiny.²⁰ Evans, too, associates it with mutiny, but qualifies it as the mistaken attribution by other characters of mutinous sentiments.²¹ Warrack, in the annotation accompanying the composer's recording of the opera, suggests that the motive typifies the "futile straining" of the men against the harsh conditions of their lives.²²

There is a similar repetition of the more extended saxophone melody that occurs first accompanying the trio following the Novice's flogging in Act I, Scene 1. It reappears in Act II when Claggart threatens the Novice with another flogging if he does not betray Billy. The melody becomes associated with Vere at the end of Act II, Scene 2, in the final lines of the soliloquy, as Vere identifies himself and his crew as lost on the infinite sea. To White this melody suggests the brutality of the punishment man has devised. Evans associates the theme with "blind, arbitrary cruelty," and goes on to point out that musically it is the inversion of the notes with which Billy and the others hail "Starry Vere" at the end of Act I. This latter theme represents to Evans the "wisely benevolent despotism the men see in Captain Vere" and thus makes even more powerful the orchestral repetition of the Novice's melody as Vere accepts the verdict against Billy. 4

One other repeated musical device transferred from one character to another should be mentioned here: the fanfare-derived figures usually accompanying Billy's songs—e.g., "Billy Budd, king of the birds," the duet with Vere when Billy thinks he is to be promoted, "Billy in the Darbies," and his farewell in Act II, Scene 3. White has demonstrated that this figure is the basis of the series of chords accompanying Vere's offstage communication of the sentence to Billy. Some of these chords, which to Evans denote Billy's moral strength and to White suggest a "rainbow of hope," reappear in Billy's farewell, at the words "I'm strong, . . . and that's enough"; some of the chords return in the Epilogue as Vere sings, "But I've sighted a sail in the storm, the far-shining sail, and I'm content."²⁵

None of the commentators cited above is eager to offer his labels

for various musical motives as definitive guides to their meaning. Instead, each urges caution. White notes a musical and psychological ambivalence in their repetitions, but he does not speculate on its significance. Evans points out that the motives derive from the opening bars of the opera and that their plasticity "can create some confusion to the most literal-minded motive-hunter." Because the motives are so closely related, he continues, there are occasionally "curiously inapposite echoes"; why, he asks, should Vere's formula (the "Starry Vere" phrase cited above in connection with the Novice) appear during Claggart's monologue at the words "Having seen you, what choice remains to me?" To this question might be added others. What, to take only one example, is the connection between Vere's "O what have I done?" and the other occurrences of the so-called mutiny motive?

An answer to these questions may lie in White's comment that a problem posed by the action of Billy Budd may be solved in purely musical terms.²⁸ Here, however, the process should be reversed; that is, one should look for a solution to the musical problem in the dramatic action. Both the music and the drama unfold from the Prologue as Vere narrates the events that take place on stage. Consequently the opening dissonance, the kernel of both the harmonic and melodic materials of the opera, may well represent Vere's own doubts and confusion, his own ambivalent feelings about the events he narrates. Like the pattern of repeated verbal phrases, musical materials are transformed and transferred from one character to another as Vere sifts and evaluates data in his attempt to recall and assess events. Thus Vere's opening question and his men's expressions of dissatisfaction are really expressions of the same suffering, a suffering that culminates for both Vere and the crew in Billy's hanging. This similarity of Vere and his men is emphasized by the double proximities of his "O what have I done" and their expressions of suffering: their "O heave away" refrain follows his Prologue question immediately, just as their wordless response to the hanging precedes Vere's question in the Epilogue. Recognizing this similarity also intensifies the irony of the inverted musical relationship of the motives of the Novice and "Starry Vere": in spite of appearances directly to the contrary, the identical musical materials suggest the essential likeness of the boy and the man. In much the same way the presence of the "Starry Vere" motive in Claggart's monologue is not at all inapposite; rather, it is a token of Vere's growing awareness, as he reconsiders these events, of his role in Claggart's design against Billy. Together with the reference to having no choice, the presence of

the motive also suggests the Novice, who will in fact appear immediately after the monologue and show himself, like the Captain, to have no choice but to carry out Claggart's demands.

The centrality of Vere's consciousness to this account of Billy Budd is clearest in the Epilogue. The density of musical and verbal repetitions there reflects Vere's new awareness and acceptance of the significance of all that has happened. Many of the verbal phrases of the Prologue are repeated, and their combination with Billy's words of farewell shows that Vere has resolved his initial dilemma. He can now say what he has done; he is no longer lost on the infinite sea but has a sure destination; he is content. With this verbal resolution comes an equivalent musical resolution. In answer to the straining fifth-semitone motive of Vere's question comes not the anguished melody of the Novice or the ironic certainty of Starry Vere but the chords that accompanied Billy's valedictory declarations of strength and contentment. As the Captain appropriates Billy's words and the orchestra plays Billy's chords, the resolution of the bitonal conflict finally occurs as Vere sings, "There's a land where she'll anchor for ever." As noted above, the resolution to B-flat has here the power of a double resolution. Moreover, the prolongation of the harmonic conflict over the span of the entire opera further intensifies the resolution, so that in the theater it has an effect analogous to the shining surge of E major in Isolde's Liebestod. That this long-delayed release of harmonic tension occurs as the Captain accepts Billy's blessing by taking his words (and with them his strength and certainty) makes this passage the verbal as well as the musical culmination of the work. The weight of the opera thus comes to rest upon this acceptance after the action has been shown on the stage. Vere's return as an old man, isolated in the darkness of the stage, emphasizes once again his centrality. The audience sees and hears Vere much as he appeared in the Prologue. Yet the musical and verbal development have made a crucial change within Vere's mind. "I am an old man now," he sings once again, but now, as a result of the mental process he has just shown the audience, he is at peace.

Just as Forster seems not to have realized fully the new centrality of Vere in this operatic version of the story, so too he seems to have underestimated the full import of the change in Vere's behavior during Billy's trial. In his letter to *The Griffin* Forster suggested that this change was no more than the tidying process all adapters must carry out. There he wrote that Melville sometimes "got muddled," particularly in Vere's "unseemly harangue" in the trial scene. Rather than clarifying Melville's muddle, however, the operatic Vere's silence at the

trial puzzles anyone familiar with the novella. Other changes, like the ones discussed above, can be easily explained as necessities of the operatic stage; furthermore, they involve no real change in the central action of the novella. Vere's sudden silence, however, is a radical departure from Melville's Vere, who urges Billy's execution despite his certainty of the falseness of Claggart's charges and of the young sailor's essential goodness.

This change can, however, be explained in terms of Vere's new centrality to this telling of the story. Vere, the narrator of the opera, contradicts the novella on only this one important point. Is his testimony, then, wholly reliable? That is, is it possible that, for whatever reason, Vere is suppressing information? Is his sense of guilt so great that he cannot admit even to himself his own part in the condemnation of Billy Budd? Evidence in the libretto suggests that these questions are not wholly without basis. In the first place, the Captain's sense of responsibility seems somewhat exaggerated in the present operatic form of the narrative. The court-martial reach their verdict immediately (if with regret), only then requesting Vere's guidance. When he has nothing to say to them, they pronounce their verdict and sentence, which Vere relays to the prisoner. That is all. If, however, that is the extent of the Captain's responsibility, then some of his statements need further explanation: "It is not his trial, it is mine, mine. It is I whom the devil awaits," he sings immediately after Billy has struck Claggart; "I ... have enacted death," he comments after the court-martial have delivered their verdict, adding "Before what tribunal do I stand if I destroy goodness? . . . Beauty, handsomeness, goodness, it is for me to destroy you." Finally in the Epilogue comes the admission that may explain these statements: "I could have saved him." Only the admission of an involvement greater than that shown in the present version of the events can explain Vere's acute sense of responsibility.

When one looks still more closely at the trial in both the novella and the opera, another curious feature emerges. In Melville's work one figure is, in fact, silent during the trial: the Sailing Master. In the opera, however, he and Vere appear to have exchanged roles. The First Lieutenant and Ratcliffe call for justice and mercy, while the Sailing Master consistently calls for vengeance. The following ensemble passage is representative:

First Lieutenant: Justice is our duty, justice is our hope.
Sailing Master: Claggart, he's dead—give the murderer the rope.
Ratcliffe: Mercy on his youth—there's no harm in the lad.

If Vere is unconsciously projecting his actions onto another character,

the extreme cruelty of the Sailing Master's words may well be a reflection of Vere's appraisal of the wrongness of condemning Billy and of his inability to face his own part in the condemnation.

There is yet another point to consider in the choice of the Sailing Master as Vere's scapegoat. The Sailing Master is the first character with whom Vere links himself verbally in the references to the flaw in goodness and the flaws in the newly impressed seamen. The Sailing Master is also the point of origin of one of the key terms of the libretto: contentment. Thus if the Sailing Master is the recipient of Vere's sense of guilt, he also holds the key to Vere's redemption insofar as he supplies the term with which the Captain expresses his eventual sense of release. Before that release can occur, though, the concept of contentment must undergo a change. The Sailing Master's statement that the Navy "must be content" with the new recruits is a grudging concession; he is no more content than the Vere of the Prologue, who ponders the imperfections in man as evidence of the Devil's involvement with earthly life. It is Billy who transforms the Sailing Master's statement into expressions of genuine contentment with his lot, whether as an impressed seaman, as a foretopman who will not receive his anticipated promotion, or as the victim of military justice. It is that ability to accept imperfection which gives Billy his strength, and as Vere recounts the events of the opera, he seems to come to recognize that ability and to make it his own. Here Vere must accept his own imperfect performance in the story of Billy Budd, accept Billy's understanding and forgiveness, and forgive himself to become content.

If one approaches *Billy Budd* as Captain Vere's account of events, an account differing in this significant way from the "true" account of the novella, another comparison of libretto and source yields still another insight into the opera. Paradoxically, by creating an account of the events made inaccurate by the narrator, the composer and his librettists have remained faithful to one of the themes of the novella.

In the final portion of this work, Melville highlights a concern that has troubled his readers ever since: how are these events to be interpreted? The question first makes itself plainly felt in the surgeon's unspoken questions about Vere's behavior when he summons the drumhead court, and the question of interpretation returns with the surgeon's terse comments on the absence of the usual spasm at Billy's death. As if to emphasize the difficulties of interpretation, Melville concludes the novella with references to three distinct accounts of Billy Budd: he comments that in his own work readers have been given a

faithful account of "how it fared with the Handsome Sailor," an account with all the "ragged edges" of "Truth uncompromisingly told"; he includes an extract from the "News from the Mediterranean" in a naval chronicle, in which an innocent Claggart is the victim of a vindictive, knife-wielding Billy; and he ends with a foretopman's ballad ("Billy in the Darbies") about Billy's last hours, based on the sailors' combined convictions of Billy's innocence (they equate the spar from which he was hanged with the Cross) and of the unavoidability, from the naval standpoint, of the penalty.

Like the novella itself, the opera provides no answer to the question of interpretation; instead, it presents a fourth account of how it fared with the handsome sailor. Like the novella, this account, too, questions the basis upon which such decisions are made. And, like the two brief accounts that conclude the novella, the operatic tale reveals much about its teller and the situation that conditions the telling of his tale. This presentation of Vere's narrative, given shape by the interlinked repetitions of verbal and musical patterns, provides an audience familiar with Melville's novella the opportunity to compare simultaneously the similarities and differences of these two accounts. Indeed, the great fidelity of the libretto to Melville's words and the references even to other of his works repeatedly invite such a close comparison and throw all differences into sharp relief.

Surely, then, it is not enough to treat Billy Budd as a mostly accurate copy of "Billy Budd" and to ignore its divergences as mere tidying; the totality of the opera—the words, the music, the scenic presentation—merits careful consideration as a dialogue with Melville's novella. When listeners engage in this dialogue with the familiar text, they enter into a new relationship both with Melville's and with Britten's works. Just as they do not come to the opera without knowledge of Vere's behavior at the trial, they cannot return to the novella without an enriched understanding of Vere's dilemma. Vere can no longer seem the rigidly calm figure who dies without remorse at Billy's death. Vere's decision, the opera seems to contend, was not the simple expedient of military justice Vere's disinterested address to the court-martial may suggest in the novella. Nor was his peace of mind easily obtained. Vere's struggle in the opera is so powerful that it leads him to try to suppress the truth of his own involvement in the decision. Until he can accept his own culpability, his own imperfection, he cannot be content. It is this portion of the story of Billy Budd, treated so briefly in the novella, that the composer and his librettists seized upon and presented

on the stage. And it is this challenge to the listeners who know and love Melville's work to re-evaluate that work from this new vantage point that gives *Billy Budd* much of its strength.

¹ In Alexander Pushkin, Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse, trans. and commentary by Vladimir Nabokov, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), II, 530; III, 42, 333. In his sympathetic discussion of the opera Gary Schmidgall adds, "Perhaps we would be more impatient with the opera if we knew Pushkin's poem better and held it dearer," in Literature as Opera (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 240.

² "George Crabbe and Peter Grimes," Two Cheers for Democracy (London:

Edward Arnold, 1972), p. 179.

³ The history of this collaboration is detailed in P. N. Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977–78), II, 281–87; see also Stephen Wadsworth, "The Go-Between," Opera News, 19 April 1980, pp. 10–14.

⁴ Selected Letters of E. M. Forster, ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (Lon-

don: Collins, 1985), II, 237.

5 "Letter from E. M. Forster," The Griffin 1 (1951), 5.

6 "Letter from E. M. Forster," 6.

⁷ The terms are borrowed from Herbert Lindenberger, Opera: The Ex-

travagant Art (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 42.

8 Most commentary on the relationship of "Billy Budd" and Billy Budd points to the similarities of the two works. D. and P. M. Fitzgerald, for example praised Forster and Crozier for having "preserved the atmosphere" of Melville's tale "so faithfully"; the Prologue and Epilogue, however, they found "ill-conceived," for the "idea of the captain, whose destiny is at one with his victim's, living on to a comfortable old age, is shocking in its dramatic impropriety" (New Review NS35 [1952], 11-12). Of other writers on the two works, it is Andrew Porter who goes furthest in exploring the significant differences between them, drawing on Forster's brief comments on "Billy Budd" in Aspects of the Novel ("Saved," The New Yorker, 23 October 1978, pp. 164-74). An important exception is Noel Bradley, "The Non-Clinical Test of a Clinical Theory: Billy Budd, Novel and Libretto," International Review of Psycho-Analysis, 7 (1980), 233-49. Dr. Bradley is concerned principally with the character of Claggart and with Forster's defensive response to the novel as "formally equivalent to a homosexual analysand's response to the interpretation of his envious hatred for his homosexual love-objects" (p. 249).

5 "Staging First Productions I," in The Operas of Benjamin Britten, ed. David

Herbert (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 31.

¹⁰ Benjamin Britten: His Life and Operas, 2nd ed., ed. John Evans (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), p. 180. To White's list may be added a number of other phrases taken directly from or clearly based upon Melville's text. In both novella and opera, Billy is a "King's bargain" and the Master-at-Arms is reprimanded for approaching Vere with "so foggy a tale" and is warned of the "yardarm for a false witness." In both works, the phrase "Board 'em in the smoke" is applied to Dansker. Similarly, at the hanging, Melville's Billy "ascending, took the full rose of dawn," just as the operatic Vere recalls that the ship "passed on . . . towards the rose of dawn" following the

hanging. Melville's Billy is buried at sea to the "croaked requiem" of the seafowl, and in the libretto Vere recalls that "their harsh cries were his

requiem."

A rather more oblique reference to Melville's text occurs when Vere calls Claggart a "veritable Argus," to the apparent puzzlement of his officers. His action derives from Vere's habit of alluding to antiquity, completely unaware, as the novelist points out, that "such remote allusions . . . were altogether alien" to his subordinates. Although Melville's Vere never refers to Argus in describing Claggart, the librettists' choice of allusion is particularly apt. Not only does it describe Claggart's watchfulness, but it is also reminiscent of Melville's many references to Claggart's eyes, a feature the author uses to help characterize the Master-at-Arms. The librettists' allusion has the further advantage of characterizing Vere. The single allusion and the officers' response show the audience much of Vere's intelligence and his separateness from his officers in this, his first appearance after the Prologue.

All passages from Melville cited both here and in the body of the essay are taken from Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*, *Sailor (An Inside Narrative)*, ed. Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) as the most readily available current text, although it differs from the text available to Forster and Crozier. All citations from the libretto may be found in *The Operas of Benjamin Britten*, ed. David Herbert (New York: Colum-

bia University Press, 1979), pp. 183–205.

¹¹ Likewise, in the novella Billy is the only seaman impressed from *The Rights of Man*; in the opera, however, Red Whiskers and Arthur Jones are also taken. This change, too, allows the librettists to present more of Melville's exposition with the brevity required of drama. In the novella, Billy's former captain calls Billy the jewel of the crew and narrates his effect on the rest of the men. The librettists show the contrast of Billy and his shipmates by presenting the belligerent Red Whiskers and the cringing Jones before bringing Billy on stage. Even some of Melville's phrasing is preserved; it is, ironically, Claggart who describes Billy as a "jewel" in response to the First Lieutenant's call for an evaluation.

12 White, p. 178.

- 13 Furbank, E. M. Forster, II, 285.
- ¹⁴ Ms. owned by Eric Crozier, on loan to the Britten-Pears Library, Aldeburgh.

15 "The Music of 'Billy Budd,' " Opera, 3 (1952), 206, 213.

¹⁶ "Billy Budd on the Stage: An Early Discussion between Producer and Designer," *Tempo* (Autumn 1951), p. 21.

¹⁷ White, pp. 182-3.

- ¹⁸ White, p. 183.
- ¹⁹ White, p. 184.

²⁰ White, pp. 184-6.

²¹ The Music of Benjamin Britten (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1979), p. 166.
 ²² "A Literary and Musical Analysis," in libretto, Billy Budd, by Benjamin Britten, with Peter Pears and Peter Glossop, cond. Benjamin Britten, London

Symphony Orchestra, London Records, OSA 1390, 1968, p. 9.

White, p. 188.Evans, p. 167.

²⁵ Evans, p. 166; White, pp. 186–7. A brassily orchestrated sequence of these chords, unremarked by either commentator, accompanies Billy's march to his execution. The fanfare figure associated with Billy, from which these chords are derived, is strikingly reminiscent of the fanfare figure in the messenger's aria in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. The similarity is made more interesting by the dramatic parallel: the messenger brings word that allows Oedipus to discover what he has done, just as thinking back to Billy's death allows Vere to say finally in the Epilogue what he has done.

²⁶ White, p. 184.

²⁷ Evans, pp. 166–7. ²⁸ White, p. 184.

The Third Cheer: "Voice" in Forster

JAN B. GORDON

"Even when serious things are said it remains trivial and that's why it is so seamed with scandal and gossip; people are meeting one another in a wrong medium. So don't let the gossiping worry you."

E. M. Forster's reply in June of 1919 to a worried Siegfried Sassoon suggests that the difficulty in making "connections" was inextricably bound to the medium of communication. In his fiction as well as in social and literary criticism, Forster always strove to recover voice by preventing its deflection into an obstacle to communication. Literary critics have long found voice a particularly difficult concept, perhaps because of the conspiracy to give voice precedence over writing that for Jacques Derrida is at the heart of western philosophy. Beginning with his critique of Husserl and particularly in the later essay on Emmanuel Levinas,2 he has labelled writing as somehow "supplementary," a mere set of notations designed to serve speech while simultaneously testifying to the loss of some original and originating Word. This precedence of voice is associated with humanism in its various manifestations, which, for Derrida, fosters nostalgia, enforces the sense of a lost authority that must be restored, and maintains the illusion of "full presence" as a continuous possibility. Insofar as inscribed language-which can only defer to what is absent-becomes the vehicle for a self-consciousness and a self-possession that can be manifested only as speech, the literary critic is the agent of his own crisis. Because "voice" is a metaphysical concept for Derrida, an idea which must always be interpreted or re-presented in writing, it can never participate in an aesthetic or ethical view of life independently of some sacred text. Contrary to Derrida's deconstructive idea of voice, Forster's achievement testifies to the necessity of acknowledging voice as its own unique authority, always

immanent rather than transcendent. Forster's voice can be comprehended without the need for Derrida's ever-present text, and is hence capable of generating its own values.

Forster belongs in the long tradition of Cambridge humanism, which Frederick Crews alleges to be ultimately imperilled.³ This liberal humanism embraces all the biases and has all the champions-most notably the late Lionel Trilling-that would follow from the kind of critical conspiracy that Derrida documents. Yet E. M. Forster, perhaps alone among twentieth-century novelists, never lent voice a transcendental privilege by identifying it with some distant origin. Forster escapes Derrida's nihilistic trap through a constant awareness of a voice-in-the-world that is both miraculous and subversive of a confused representational order. Although voice itself is immanent for Forster, those who are made to become aware of it can occasionally transcend the barriers imposed by the material world: color, class, wealth. In this sense the aesthetic of voicing in Forster's work resembles that of Walter Benjamin. Those related elements denied the formal principle of language-sound-can communicate only through a medium that is more or less material, inadequate, and inefficient.4 In "On Languages as Such and on the Languages of Man," Walter Benjamin argued that the "incomparable feature of human language" is that the "magical community with things is immaterial," and that sound is the symbol of that immateriality.5 Hence the strategies by which a civilization denies or tolerates "voice" become crucial in defining its idea of community.

The obsessively non-materialistic Gino Carella is memorable, above all, as a voice, and the reader of *Where Angels Fear To Tread* hears Gino almost before being visually aware of him:

The voice of her adversary was heard at last, singing fearlessly from his expanded lungs, like a professional. Herein he differed from Englishmen, who always have a little feeling against music, and sing only from the throat, apologetically. (I, 101)

At the performance of Lucia di Lammermoor, Harriet, Philip Herriton, and Caroline Abbott are exposed to the real Italy of sounds impossible to convey in the increasingly useless Baedeker. As Lucia sings, "the theatre murmured like a hive of happy bees" until "its top note was drowned in a shout of universal joy" (I, 95). Gino, climbing over the box to greet his friends, seems to emerge from a pit of "melodious cries," and a coughing Harriet attempts in vain to follow the plot while simultaneously silencing her neighbors with a "shish" (I, 94). These

British, like the Wilcoxes in Howards End, dwell in the material world of "telegrams and anger" while remaining collectively and individually oblivious to the exigencies of sound and voice. Not merely the dated Baedeker, but writing generally, cannot come to terms with Gino's physical or emotional life. Philip's calling card, consigned to a bucket lift, goes temporarily astray; then the servant, Perfetta, feigns deafness in order to deprive of its voice his oral enquiry for Gino. Since an embargo on letters from Italy denies Irma any information about her half-brother's life or appearance, she asks her guardians' permission to include the new infant in her nightly prayers. Their grudging accession brings her distant relative closer as part of a collectively shared voice, and it is precisely this sharing of voice that constitutes a de facto family. Two forms of familial relationship obtain throughout the novel: the first is defined by blood ties that, given numerous re-marriages, are confusingly subjected to arbitrarily determined obligations; the second, more loosely defined, is established by a sympathy of shared sounds. This confrontation between a legally defined family and an aural extended family is nowhere better illustrated than in Philip's cynical recognition that the echoing sounds of Italy constitute relationships that cannot be circumscribed genealogically: "Philip knew these relatives well; they ramify, if need be, all over the peninsula" (I, 82).

Surely the British fear of voice in Where Angels Fear To Tread is a fear of its power to subvert other, presumably more humanistic values imagined to be the repository of the western logocentric family. When a possessive Caroline cautions Gino that he plays far too roughly with his child—implying a lack of fatherly care—after the infant has emitted a "piercing yell" (I, 110), the new father observes that the silent cry denotes real danger or illness. The comment is prophetic, given the nearly tearless subsequent death of his son at the hands of those who strive to silence voice wherever they go. In fact Gino's qualifications for a future wife suggest that sound and voice are paramount: "She is fond of children. She is clean; she has a pleasant voice" (I, 110)

Gino's tragi-comic revenge for the death of his kidnapped son involves an attempt to force Philip Herriton, he of the stiff upper lip, to acknowledge pain, not as emotional blackmail, but as a demand that the human voice displace a bogus humanism. By alternately choking and releasing his adversary's windpipe, Gino Carella forces voice to supplant a novel's worth of dissimulation:

A great sob shook the whole body, another followed, and then [Philip] gave a piercing cry of woe, and stumbled towards Miss Abbott like a child and clung to her.

All through the day Miss Abbott had seemed to Philip like a goddess, and more than ever did she seem so now. (I, 138)

In Gino's grasp Philip's identification with the dead infant of the "piercing cry" is complete. By replacing the now absent voice, Philip lends it continuity by bringing it back to earth as a voice all are capable of sharing—and he becomes the forerunner of Henry Wilcox, who must abandon travel plans, rubber contracts, and court summons in order to take the time to weep.

To be sure, in a sense much of Forster's achievement appears as a thinly veiled attack on the traditional family, an impulse now fashionably attributed to his homosexuality.6 The forced removal of a child from history, either literally by sudden death (Where Angels Fear To Tread, The Longest Journey) or metaphorically, as a consequence of absent or interrupted paternity (Howards End), or by a conscious decision not to have any children (Henry and Margaret Wilcox), in effect makes the family an endangered species, even if they breed like rabbits, as Miss Avery alleges. The structural dynamics of Forster's plots are remarkably similar insofar as voice becomes associated with a child's presence made discontinuous with genealogy. Naming (as the inheritance of paternity, class, value) is separated from voice. In Where Angels Fear To Tread the death of Gino's son brings about a recognition of shared dependence in the blutbrüderschaft struggle of Philip and Gino. In The Longest Journey heterosexual love is associated with the death of the child at the crossing. Rickie's death at the novel's conclusion gives new life to Stephen, the brother-son, who assumes the role of the dead child at the crossing and thus indirectly spawns Stephen's daughter who, as matriarchy dominates, will bear the name of their beautiful mother. What Wilfred Stone has termed "surrogate breeding", or various permutations of surrogate parenting, is surely related to this attempt to maintain voice as a principle of continuity in a world where writing, literacy, lineage, and experiences shaped by guidebooks and texts all seem overdetermined. "Relating" in ways other than those dictated by an authorized narrative or an authorized father is essential for Forster, and voice is his metaphor for an unauthorized, unsigned, but nonetheless real, continuity.

Lucy Honeychurch's Italian holiday commences with a conscious resistance to the appeals of voice. When George Emerson offers to exchange rooms, she demurs out of respect for a convention of well-bred tourists abroad: a period of probationary silence precedes any formal introduction. Lucy's gradual release from Sawston and her Baedeker to an Emersonian aphoristic expansiveness is a function of

the incessant demands of voice, some of which are sexual. She recognizes that

whenever these ill-bred tourists *spoke* [emphasis added] the contest widened and deepened till it dealt, not with rooms and views, but with—well, with something quite different whose existence she had not realized before. (III, 4)

The crucial event in Lucy's maturing awareness of the magical demands of speech occurs in the Piazza Signoria where the suppression of voice is death. During a fight between two unknown Italians, one suddenly

frowned; he bent toward Lucy with a look of interest, as if he had an important message for her. He opened his lips to deliver it, and a stream of red came out between them and trickled down his unshaven chin.

(III, 41)

The blood of repressed speech spatters the cheap photos and cards that Lucy has purchased. The notion that experience can be textually contained as a memento is contaminated by the possibility of a verbal appeal to which she is deaf. Disposing of blood-stained photographs and souvenirs in the Arno, "whose roar was suggesting some unexpected melody in her ears" (III, 45), is the first, necessary stage in the abandonment of a view of life as a museum, in favor of Mr. Emerson's notion of life to be lived as "'a public performance on the violin, in which you must learn the instrument as you go along'" (III, 201). But this attempt to achieve the finer tone which in a later essay Forster was to term "The C Minor of that Life," obliges Lucy to abandon her habit of merely "repeating what you have heard older people say" (III, 23).

Her native Windy Corner is an arena where mechanized, easily-imitated patterns of social discourse strip voice of its individuating characteristics: "At the last minute, when the social machine was clogged hopelessly, one member or other of the family poured in a drop of oil" (III, p. 138). Speech exists there merely to be kept going as a game—voice conceived of as a competitive instrument rather than as a sound to be listened to:

Cecil praised one too much for being athletic. Was that it? Cecil made one talk in this way, instead of letting one talk in his own way. This tired one. Was that it? (III, 85)

A change in her voice shortly after returning to England first suggests Lucy's conversion:

"Cecil?" exclaimed Lucy.

"Don't be rude, dear," said his mother placidly. "Lucy, don't screech. Its a new bad habit you're getting into." (III, 113)

Silent Lucy gradually develops a voice of her own. Shortly thereafter she heeds the elder Emerson's advice to "listen to the wind among the pines" (III, 127) as a prelude to hearing George speak to her:

She was nervous at night. When she talked to George—they met again almost immediately after the rectory—his voice moved her and she wished to remain near him. (III, 142)

In Forster the intrusion of a vocalized otherness constitutes an awareness of meaning and affection, the only escape from the limitations of other forms of discourse dependent upon the representational: letters, received opinion, telegrams, diaries, guidebooks, and gossip, none of which can effect a genuine "connection."

The chaperone is the physical embodiment of this dependence upon the presumed authority of the representational. At the outset of each novel a chaperone embodies the assumption that any experience can be handed down and bequeathed to a novice as advice, warnings, instructions. By inheritance, which Lionel Trilling saw as a primary theme of Howards End, property and propriety are historically maintained.8 The civilizing features of Empire, for better or for worse, made proprietary interest an institutionalized chaperone. Its primary goal was to make "them" like us. That very notion fosters the myth of the representationally real. Adela Quested wants to see the real India, just as Miss Lavish, in A Room With a View, wants to write a realistic novel about Italy, and just as poor Leonard Bast wants to improve his prose style by reading Ruskin's Stones of Venice. Behind all of these futile efforts, as behind Lucy Honeychurch's blood-stained postcards, is the belief that experience, like houses, family names, and views, can be transmitted unchanged to others. Genealogical or aesthetic discountinuity in the descent from the original to the copy threatens the belief that self-possession is a model that can be formally, univocally bequeathed to others. The gradual degeneration is perhaps best symbolized by the congenital illnesses and weaknesses that afflict so many of Forster's characters: allergies, heart disease, lameness. Voice, however, is curiously resistant to that particular manifestation of degeneration.

But the urge to define the historically significant as only what can be (re)presented or faithfully reproduced does, however, afflict speech and voice as they are diluted to gossip, which is simultaneously used and feared by the English in Forster's novels. Often the spate of urgent epistles and telegrams is an attempt to forestall or muffle the effects of gossip, and thus reveals an enormous fear of exchanged or collective speech. Lilia's engagement in Where Angels Fear To Tread surfaces ini-

tially as "strange rumors," ironically one of the reasons for fleeing the watchful eyes of her in-laws:

"Ah! when I came to your house a poor young bride, how you all looked me over—never a kind word—and discussed me, and thought I might just do; . . . and you said funny things about me to show how clever you were!" (I, 27)

Gossip, speech as self-perpetuating supplement, maintains the myth of the real, for it confirms the illusion that reality can be (re)presented. Its power to shape reputations and responses is in direct proportion to the dilution of its authoritative base.

Gossip is most dangerous when it tempts closure. "Anyone" can in fact become an author (protected by anonymity) merely by supplementing a prior version and preceding it with "have you heard?" In the Miss Alans of A Room With a View Forster went so far as to create professional gossips, much as Jane Austen creates Miss Bates: "they were such gossips, and if one told them, the news would be everywhere in no time" (III, 191). Until she learns to acknowledge the urgent claims of voice, represented in the young George Emerson, who deigns to "greet her with the shout of the morning star" (III, 134), Lucy will never be able adequately to answer her mother's query: "But why shouldn't it be everywhere in no time?" (III, 191). Nor will she ever be able to answer her chaperone's request for a strategy to inhibit gossip: "How are you going to stop him talking about it?" (III, 74).

In its potential all-inclusiveness gossip potentially connects everyone. As a conspiracy to gain access to that which is private, gossip is a constant reminder that history is neither "given" nor exactly "reproducible," but provisional, subject to potential democratization by an anonymous "they": "Really we do not want it known in Sawston that there is a baby" (I, 58). The fear of gossip is a tacit acknowledgment that voice is creative insofar as it adds "versions." As one's private history—a form of private property—becomes public, gossip encroaches upon the rootedness of British society, as the threatened construction of flats and the dust encroach in *Howards End*. As potentially uncontrollable narration, gossip in Forster's novels always victimizes those who lack the ability either to sound or to listen.

Furthermore, in its tendency to inflate, gossip is a silent partner in the endless *speculation* that threatens the life of all the classes. Both financial and verbal speculation are subject to the ethics of "limited liability": for example, Henry Wilcox's shabby defense of his gossip about the state of the Porphyrion Fire Insurance Company that ulti-

mately ruins Leonard Bast. Although Voice has the power to enfold history and thereby to humanize Fate, it is often perverted. In Jacky's tawdry "If it isn't Hen!" (IV, 228) voice is deflected into the material realm along with the food and shares the myth of a representative narrative easily consumed by others as a "story." Margaret Schlegel must learn, as did Caroline Abbott and Lucy Honeychurch, to distinguish between two different kinds of voice: "Far more mysterious than the call of sex to sex is the tenderness we throw into that call" (IV, 238). The recognition that one can as easily be the object of gossip as its subject, as Henry Wilcox discovers in Howards End, is a first step toward seeing meaning as a transaction within a given community of speaking and hearing, rather than as a function of some social contract or convention. But culture defined only representationally, as the repository of letters, pictures, books, can never become part of any dialogue because the sharing of voice is absent. Helen Schlegel's assertion that Leonard Bast "doesn't want more books to read, but to read books rightly" (IV, 130) is in part a suggestion that he become aware of voice by listening rather than reproducing it as a function of memory. For those who always seem in such a hurry to "get on," the urge to listen is always a demand for more time. I. R. Ackerley recalls Forster as a consummate, almost obsessed listener:

... when I was alone with him and his unselfconscious listening attention was turned upon me—an attention which, I felt, was hearing not only the thing said but the motive in saying it—I experienced often a sense of strain, as though more and better were expected of me than I really believed myself to contain. To be really listened to is a very serious matter.⁹

The need to free voice itself from critical concepts like "narrative voice" is perhaps most obvious in *Maurice*. ¹⁰ That novel commences with an attempt to deny the mystery of voice by means of an inadequate graphic representation, Mr. Ducie's voiceless sex education class:

... choosing a smooth piece of sand drew diagrams upon it with his walking stick. "This will make it easier," he said to the boy, who watched dully: it bore no relation to his experiences. (19)

Similar crises in representation are repeated during Maurice's apprenticeship, but perhaps most notably when he is first attracted to Clive Durham. His new friend refuses to repeat a musical performance by arguing in favor of its tonal uniqueness: "A movement isn't like a separate piece—you can't repeat it" (39). By contrast, a comfortable,

civilized respectability is associated in Maurice with the boredom of the epistolary. British domestic life is

Letters—a pile of them, and all subtly annoying. Ada, most civil. Kitty, saying his mother looked done up. Aunt Ida—a postcard—wanting to know whether the chauffeur was supposed to obey orders or had one misunderstood?, business fatuities, circulars about the College Mission, the Territorial training, the Golf Club, the Property Defence Association. He bowed humorously over them to his hostess. (175)

Clive Durham's abandonment of their homosexual attachment accompanies a renewed devotion to the myth of representation. In the second half of the novel he is forever writing and correcting political placards and leaflets, always slightly "dissatisfied with his printed appeal to the electors—it struck him as too patronizing for these times" (211). He is last seen correcting proofs and waving farewell.

Maurice Hall's decision to remain in "the land of the looking glass" in company with Alec Scudder is dictated in part by his slow awakening to the call of the unmediated voice that deprives him of an authorized "self":

He wasn't alone. Or again he hadn't personally written. Since coming to Penge he seemed a bundle of voices, not Maurice, and now he could almost hear them quarreling inside. (154)

His sudden awareness of the self as a composite of voices leads him into knowledge of the politics of the ever-changing collective voice. The constant threat of a public revelation of his relationship with Scudder means that his name is always provisional, never representative. He must create his sense of self every day, which frees him from the labels imposed by class. Blackmail is Scudder's attempt to democratize voice. It is a way of saving: in spite of my working-class accent, my voice is equal to yours as long as you will pay for its silence. Blackmail represents yet one more attempt to set epistolary limits on voice, even as it speaks to the weakness of that mode of enclosure.11 This tendency to repress voice while simultaneously acknowledging its power by misappropriating it is a recurring pattern in Forster's fiction. The old schoolmaster, Ducie, priding himself on never forgetting the voice of a former student, at that very moment misidentifies Maurice's in the British Museum. And the patronizing Clive Durham, upon learning of Hall's attachment to one of his servants, assumes that the name "Scudder" is a "façon de parler" (212). He confuses class speech with voice itself. Forster here describes their developing love in its classical sense,

a sharing of the aural, the moment described in Maurice as "scarcely speech" (200).

Alan Wilde astutely notes that Forster often moves from depths to surfaces with a consequent loss of authorial distance and irony. 12 Yet, if distance and detachment are necessary for irony, a renewed attention to voice may in fact hint at Forster's recognition that irony depends upon the myth of the representative so prominent in the novel of manners. "Narrative voice" (a striking oxymoron) is one more attempt to force characters to speak according to some socially predetermined model—a kind of authorial colonialism not unlike that of Cecil Vyse. Voice must somehow remove itself from the requirement to speak for someone or in behalf of something. At certain moments, when it rises to the surface—as for example in the pervasive chorus of echoing voices in the concluding hay-cutting scene to Howards End-voice shows itself to be the superior music and supplements the spiritual emptiness of invitations, telegrams, and the obscured meaning of Mrs. Wilcox's barely written bequest. It is a renewal of the earthly spiritual power of Mrs. Wilcox who "trails, trails, trails," whose very being has the qualities of a lingering voice.

Perhaps the richest discussion of this elaborate process of evocation occurs in *Aspects of the Novel*. In the first of the Clark Lectures Forster referred to the story "as the repository of [a] voice" (XII, 27)

It does not give us anything as important as the author's personality. . . . What the story does do in this particular capacity, all it can do, is to transform us from readers into listeners, to whom "a" voice speaks, the voice of the tribal narrator, squatting in the middle of the cave, and saying one thing after another until the audience falls asleep among their offal and bones. The story is primitive, it reaches back to the origins of literature, before reading was discovered, . . . (XII, 27)

Forster ended that initial lecture by asking his audience to join him in "repeating in exactly the right tone of voice" (XII, 29) the declaration with which he had begun the series: "The novel tells a story." He in effect requested the sharing of voice even as he discussed it. In the eighth lecture, "Patterns and Rhythms," Forster again returned to the notion of voice, now "not rounding off but opening out" (XII, 116). Voice enabled one to transcend the strategies of enclosure that had made for "round" and "flat" characters.

In that most voice-laden of his collections, Two Cheers for Democracy, Forster several times lamented the tendency of a literature always prone to "covering up the tracks" (XI, 82). And in a remarkably

Derridean fashion, he blamed the notion of the signature. In "Anonymity: An Enquiry" Forster questioned that notion which for him represented an unwelcome extension of the modern cult of personality. It tempts the reader to regard books as part of the realm of information rather than that of imagination. The voices of oral literature, which for Forster included Homer, the medieval troubadours, and even the Bible, were never so threatened with closure. Only in anonymity "absolute truth, the collected wisdom of the universe, seems to be speaking. . ." (XI, 85). Anonymity preserves voice by enabling us to approximate the state in which it was written

and there are no names down there, no personality as we understand personality, no marrying or giving in marriage. What there is down there—ah, that is another enquiry, and may the clergymen and the scientists pursue it more successfully in the future than they have in the past. (XI, 86)

However, in a 1939 essay, "They Hold Their Tongues," Forster defined the "down there" of voice negatively by lending it a strange landscape. On the eve of World War II he ironically suggested a rebirth of satire, dedicated to all those who had remained silent in the face of another voice from Nazi Germany. The mock satire was to be set in a Dantesque nether world inhabited by those "who have held their tongues so well that their tongues come off in their hands" (XI, 28). Signs abound proclaiming The Walls Have No Ears and No Birds Sing, and the souls who dwell there have enormous ears whose skins are sewn against their scalps. The "Three Anti-Nazi Broadcasts" are perhaps best read as an elaborate plea for the survival of voice. Forster believes in the institution of Parliament because it is a "Talking Shop" ("What I Believe," XI, 67); and, while looking at the photographs of Germans, he convinces himself that he detects, from their faces, people who "have not been allowed to hear" ("Three Anti-Nazi Broadcasts," XI, 33).

Criticism differs from creativity because of the differing temporal priorities which each affords to voice: "Think before you speak is criticism's motto; speak before you think creation's" ("The *Raison d'Etre* of Criticism," XI, 112). Thus, long before Derrida, Forster himself advocated a kind of "double-reading" that would link artistic creation with the Creation by making us aware of the voice that precedes the word. The intrusion of voice is the great disrupter in a world dependent upon a structured, binary correspondence between signifier and signified, like that graphically portrayed in the disputation upon "Cow" that begins *The Longest Journey*, and divides the universe into those who

believe that words represent objects and those who believe that objects exist independently of denotation. Whether one reproduces the world in words or uses words to create the world, words become equally imprisoned within a system of representation. After the abortive attempt to enclose a symphonic pastorale within a written pastoral, tentatively entitled *Pan Pipes*, Rickie Elliot himself approaches the condition of the "cracked bell" with which he is associated throughout the novel. All representation is but the principle of indeterminacy applied to repetition:

The words were kind; yet it was not for their sake that Rickie had plunged into the impalpable cloud. In the voice he had found a surer guarantee. Habits and sex may change with the new generation, features may alter with the play of a private passion, but a voice is apart from these. . . . it can, at all events, overleap one grave. 14

But in order to truly transcend the grave rather than existing as yet one more subversive element in civilization, Forster enabled voice, even though it lacks the potential for inscription, to nonetheless ground a metaphysics. Whereas in the earlier fiction, voice had held out the hope of individual redemption or the revision of a flawed private aesthetic, it is in A Passage to India that voice is finally endowed with an independent ethical function that sets it apart from Derrida's empty object of deference. In a novel whose setting represents the attempt of Britain to reproduce itself geographically and historically in a system of social codes and increasingly inapplicable laws, Forster advanced the claims of voice—by giving it a voice. For in the midst of all the divisive idle talk at the Club, the equally "silly intrigues" and "gossip" (VI, 96) of Aziz's bedroom, and the disturbingly reproduced voices of the caves, Professor Godbole calmly speaks of a larger voice that might redeem all of us. Good and evil are not acts that have an identifiable author-and hence an object of blame or praise from a communitybut part of a breath, the voice of the universal:

"When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of the universe. Similarly when good occurs." (VI, 169)

We are all related to the extent that we share a communal voice. Ethics is an *expression* performed by all of us, collectively, not a judgment upon an act of which "someone" is the author. Long before Derrida suggested the extent to which humanism devalued voice by its strategic deference and the prophets of projective verse attempted to formulate a poetics of breath, E. M. Forster was advocating a humanism with a voice audible to all who listened.

Unless otherwise noted, all citations from Forster are taken from the multiple-volume *Abinger Edition of E. M. Forster*, edited by the late Oliver Stallybrass and/or Elizabeth Heine (London: Edward Arnold, 1973—). In my text the volume number of the appropriate novel precedes the page number:

Where Angels Fear To Tread	Vol. I (1975)
A Room with a View	Vol. III (1977)
Howards End	Vol. IV (1973)
A Passage to India	Vol. VI (1978)
Two Cheers For Democracy	Vol. XI (1972)
Aspects of the Novel	Vol. XII (1974)

¹ Selected Letters of E. M. Forster (1879–1920), ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), I, 303.

² See, especially, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Uni-

versity of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 79-153.

³ Frederick C. Crews, E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962). Crews attempts to defend Forster from the accusation that character is sacrificed in favor of some transcendent aesthetic ideal.

⁴ Conversely, Forster may well have believed that when money has a voice, it participates in the human realm and ceases to exist as material wealth. Furbank recalls a night in a hotel with Forster and the sound of coins striking the floor when Forster took off his trousers prior to retiring. Forster reportedly said, "When they begin to sing, it's all over with them." See Furbank, E. M. Forster: A Life (1914–1970) London: Secker & Warburg, 1978), II, 297.

⁵ In Benjamin, One-way Street and other Writings, trans. E. Jephcott and K.

Shorter (London: New Left Books, 1979), pp. 107-123.

⁶ See, for example, Jane Pinchin, Alexandria Still: Forster, Durrell, and Cavafy (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 86–102. For an opposing view, see Joseph Epstein, "Maurice, by E. M. Forster," The New York Times Book Review, 10 October 1971, p. 1.

7 Wilfred Stone, The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster (Ox-

ford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 232.

⁸ Lionel Trilling, E. M. Forster (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1943), pp. 115–119.

⁹ J. R. Ackerley, E. M. Forster: A Portrait (London: Ian McKelvie, 1970), p. 10.

¹⁰ E. M. Forster, Maurice (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 43. Sub-

sequent references to Maurice in my text are to this Penguin Edition.

¹¹ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 37–63, makes a distinction between written texts, where the activity of production is shifted to the background, and oral modes, characterized by the splitting of the utterance's univocity (which, for Kristeva, makes up the nature of the sign). Emotional or real blackmail involves an assumption that the splitting of univocity that constitutes speech (gossip) can displace textually bounded desire.

¹² Alan Wilde, "Depths and Surfaces: Dimensions of Forsterian Irony,"

English Literature in Transition, 16:4 (1973), 257-274.

13 "For we ought really to read the book in two ways at once. . . . We ought to perform a miracle the nature of which was hinted at by the Almighty when he said that he was always glad to receive Mephistopheles in Heaven and hear him chat." ("The Raison d'Etre of Criticism," XI, 115).

14 E. M. Forster, The Longest Journey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p.

257.

E. M. Forster's Broadcast Talks

B. J. KIRKPATRICK

(This material is from the forthcoming revised edition of A Bibliography of E. M. Forster, by B. J. Kirkpatrick (1985), included here by kind permission of Oxford University Press.)

One day in the early 1960s when I was working on Mr. Forster's bibliography in his rooms at King's College, Cambridge, I asked him about his manuscripts. He then opened the doors of two of his cupboards and out they tumbled. I could hardly believe my eyes as I saw Howards End and other treasures slithering to the floor! Scripts of some of his broadcasts to India were there too. I had hoped to give some indication of their extent in a separate manuscript section and asked if I might do so but he wisely said he would prefer not, as such information would cause him 'a lot of bother' as well as disappointment to inquirers. Since then, having seen the range of his manuscripts now in the Library of King's College, I am thankful for Mr. Forster's gentle veto twenty-five years ago.

In the first edition of the bibliography (1965) and in the revised impression (1968), I included only manuscripts in public institutions, noting these under the work concerned. I also alluded to Forster's broadcasts to India. By permission of King's College, who inherited Forster's estate, I have been able to include the extensive manuscript holdings of the College Library in a separate manuscript section in the forthcoming expanded edition (1985). The inclusion of manuscripts led to an audio-visual section which covers among other things: Recorded Sound; Broadcast Talks; Radio & Television Interviews and Discussions; Radio, Stage and Television Productions; and Broadcasts in Foreign Languages. Nearly all the scripts of the sub-sections relating to the BBC survive in the BBC Written Archives Centre (Caversham Park, Reading RG4 8TZ, England) and other BBC libraries and are

noted in the manuscript part of the bibliography. Section E, re-named Miscellaneous Printed Material, also includes new material such as Reported Speech; a Testimonial; Musical Setting; and extracts from diaries and other unpublished material in books and periodicals. New editions and translations and a few unrecorded contributions to newspapers are incorporated in the existing sequence.

The following list of Forster's broadcast talks from 1928 to 1961, taken from the forthcoming new edition of the bibliography, is testimony to his commitment to India. Seventy-seven from the total of 145 were to that country, 61 being in his series of monthly talks 'Some Books' in which he reviewed new books. It seems fitting that his last broadcast, on 7 May 1961, was to India. A few of Forster's talks were translated into Hindustani and Hindi and were broadcast only in those languages and are listed elsewhere at F3d, Broadcasts in Foreign Languages. The see also references indicate of course other sections in the bibliography: A, Books and Pamphlets; B, Contributions to Books and Pamphlets; C, Contributions to Periodicals and Newspapers (the item numbers of these sections remain unchanged from the first edition); and the new sections: F, Audio-Visual Material; and G, Manuscripts. F2 noted in some of the see also references covers Recorded Sound.

BROADCAST TALKS

All talks entitled 'Some Books' in the programme 'We Speak to India' (7 August 1941–12 March 1947) were broadcast in the BBC Overseas Service (Eastern Transmission in the English Language) later (1942) named the Eastern Service. These monthly talks of 14½ minutes' duration reviewed 'recent books of interest to English speaking people in India.' Some of these talks were repeated, usually a few days later, on some of the other Overseas Services: General, African, North American, and Pacific. The talks were read by Forster unless stated otherwise.

- (1) 16 July 1928. Railway Bridges. BBC National Programme. See also A3ld; C207 (extract); Gla(1).
- (2) 15 February 1929. The Great Frost. BBC National Programme. See also Gla(2), 4e(1).
- (3) 16 April 1930. D. H. Lawrence. BBC National Programme. See also C217; Gla(3).
- (4) 13 August 1931. Books [on Coleridge]—on The Poet's Progress, by Walter D'Arcy Cresswell; The Poems of Coleridge; and The Social

- Substance of Religion, by Gerald Heard. BBC National Programme. See also C227 (Death of a Poet); Gla(4).
- (5) 3 October 1932. New Books. First in a series of seven talks. BBC National and Regional Programmes. See also C253 (Books of the Week); Gla(5).
- (6) 10 October 1932. Book Talk [on Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson]. Second in the series. See also C255; Gla(6).
- (7) 24 October 1932. Book Talk. Third in the series. See also C256 (Books of the Week); Gla(7).
- (8) 7 November 1932. Books of the Week. Fourth in the series. See also C259; Gla(8).
- (9) 21 November 1932. Books of the Week. Fifth in the series. See also C260 (Side Dishes); Gla(9).
- (10) 5 December 1932. New Books. Sixth in the series. See also C261 (Tales of Unrest); Gla(10).
- (11) 19 December 1932. New Books. Seventh and last in the series. See also C262 (Not New Books); Gla(11).
- (12) 10 March 1934. Seven Days Hard. BBC National and Regional Programmes. See also C270; Gla(12).
- (13) 4 December 1936. Tolstoy's 'War and Peace'—talk for sixth forms. BBC National Programme (For the Schools). See also (109) below; B15; C294; Gla(13).
- (14) 24 September 1937. Talk for Sixth Forms: Introductory Talk—on books. BBC National Programme (For the Schools). See also F2d(1); Gla(14), 4e(3).
- (15) 30 December 1937. Review of the Year: Books. BBC National Programme. See also C310 (Books of the Year—extract); Gla(15).
- (16) 25 August 1938. Clouds Hill. BBC Regional and West of England Programme. See also (19), (112) below; C319; F2d(2); Gla(16).
- (17) 26 December 1938. Bookshelf: On the Literature of 1938. BBC National Programme. See also C324; Gla(17).
- (18) 26 December 1938. Here's Wishing! BBC National Programme. See also C325; Gla(18).
- (19) 15 April 1939. T. E. Lawrence at Clouds Hill—repeat of (16) above slightly revised. First in the series 'The House and the Man'. BBC Regional and West of England Programme. See also (112) below; C319; Gla(19).
- (20) 17 September 1939. Reading in Wartime. In the series 'Tonight's Talk'. BBC Home Service. See also A21 (Reading as Usual); C338; Gla(20).

- (21) 5 January 1940. Books of 1939. BBC Home Service. See also C344; Gla(21).
- (22) 15 September 1940. The Nazis and Culture. First of three talks which were revised versions of talks first broadcast in Hindustani (see F3d(1-3)). BBC Overseas Service. See also C353 (Two Cultures); Gla(22).
- (23) 22 September 1940. The Nazis and Culture. Second of three talks. See also C354 (What has Germany done to the Germans?); Gla(23).
- (24) 29 September 1940. The Nazis and Culture. Last of three talks. See also C356 (What would Germany do to Britain if she won?); Gla(24).
- (25) 22 November 1940. Indian Photographic Exhibition. BBC Overseas Service (Eastern Transmission). See also A31d (The Individual and his God); C360 (extract); Gla(25), 4e(4).
- (26) 17 January 1941. Voltaire. In the series 'In My Opinion'. BBC Overseas Service. See also C362 ('But . . .'); Gla(26), 4e(5).
- (27) 17 May 1941. George Crabbe: The Poet and the Man. In the series 'Books and People'. BBC Overseas Service. See also (144) below for new reading of the script; C365; Gla(28).
- (28) 9 June 1941. Turning Over a New Leaf: Indian Novelists Writing in English. BBC Overseas Service (Eastern Transmission—We Speak to India). No script appears to survive.
- (29) 4 July 1941. Books and Reading: Books in 1941. BBC Home Service. See also C368 (Books in 1941); Gla(29).
- (30) 10 July 1941. Tolerance. In the series 'The Commonwealth of Man'. BBC Overseas Service. See also C369 (The Unsung Virtue of Tolerance); Gla(30).
- (31) 7 August 1941. Some Books—on Penguin and Pelican Books. First talk in this monthly series. No script appears to survive. See note above for all talks with this title.
- (32) 11 September 1941. Some Books—on the PEN Club Congress, London. No script appears to survive.
- (33) 15 October 1941. Some Books—on *The Road to Bordeaux*, by C. Denis Freeman; *The Scum of the Earth*, by Arthur Koestler; and *The Quest for Corvo*, by A. J. A. Symons. *See also* Gla(31).
- (34) 12 November 1941. Some Books—on Landmarks in Russian Literature, by Maurice Baring; and The Brothers Karamazov, by F. Dostoevsky. See also C371 (The Woman and the Onion); Gla(32).
- (35) 10 December 1941. Some Books: A Backward Glance over 1941—on Changes and Chances and More Changes, More Chances,

- by H. W. Nevinson; To the Lighthouse, by Virginia Woolf; Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill, by Hugh Walpole; Dubliners, by James Joyce; Elizabeth and her German Garden, by Countess von Arnim; the London Library; and literary magazines. See also Gla(33).
- (36) 8 January 1942. Some Books—there is no record of Forster's talk due on this day in the 'We Speak to India' programme and broadcast in the afternoon between 14.30 and 15.30 hours. It is unlikely that it was given since the *BBC Programmes as Broadcast* records 'Today we are deviating from our advertised programme and presenting a feature programme 'Cambridge in Wartime' by Malcolm Baker-Smith.'
- (37) 11 February 1942. Some Books—on *Grey Eminence*, by Aldous Huxley. See also Gla(34), 4e(6).
- (38) 24 February 1942. Masterpieces of English Literature—on *The Return of the Native*, by Thomas Hardy. Last in a series of 18 talks introduced by Herbert Read. BBC Eastern Service (We Speak to India). *See also* Gla(35).
- (39) 4 March 1942. Some Books—on Beware of Pity, Kaleidoscope, Marie Antoinette, and Erasmus, by Stefan Zweig; and some English novelists. See also Gla(36), 4e(7).
- (40) 1 April 1942. Some Books—on poetry. See also Gla(37), 4e(8).
- (41) 13 April 1942. The Duty of Society to the Artist. In the series 'Books and Authors'. BBC African Service. See also C374; Gla(38).
- (42) 29 April 1942. Some Books—On Ethical Ideals in India To-day, by Edward Thompson and other books on India. See also Gla(39), 4e(9).
- (43) 27 May 1942. Some Books—on Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, by Rebecca West. See also Gla(40).
- (44) 24 June 1942. Some Books—on *The Ground We Stand On*, by John Dos Passos; *The Moon is Down*, by John Steinbeck; *Mission to Moscow*, by Joseph Davies; *Walt Whitman*, by Hugh I'Anson Fausset; and *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman. *See also Gla*(41), 4e(10).
- (45) 3 July 1942. Books and the Writer: A Review of Some Outstanding Books published during the second quarter of 1942—on Mission to Moscow by Joseph Davies; The Ground We Stand On, by John Dos Passos; The Old Churches of London, by Gerald Cobb; Scene in Passing, by Robert Neumann; The Moon is Down, by John Steinbeck; Dragon Seed, by Pearl Buck; The Death of the Moth, by Virginia Woolf; and Bowen's Court, by Elizabeth Bowen. BBC Home Service. See also Gla(42).

- (46) 20 July 1942. Books and People—variant of (45) above. BBC Overseas Service. See also Gla(43).
- (47) 22 July 1942. Some Books—on Edward Gibbon. See also C376; Gla(44).
- (48) 14 August 1942. My Debt to India—first broadcast in Hindustani (see F3d(7)). Introductory talk in a series, the other contributors included Sir Francis Younghusband, Gerard Wathen, Lady Hartog, and April Darling. BBC Home Service. See also Gla(45).
- (49) 19 August 1942. Some Books—on the stage productions of Macbeth; The Merry Wives of Windsor; and Watch on the Rhine, by Lillian Hellman. See also Gla(46), 4e(11), 7.
- (50) 16 September 1942. Some Books—on The Cossacks, The Death of Ivan Ilyitch, and The Three Hermits, by Leo Tolstoy. See also (59) below; B17; Gla(47), 4e(12).
- (51) 14 October 1942. Some Books—on A Cornish Childhood, by A. L. Rowse; The Last Enemy, by Richard Hillary; Poetry in Wartime, by M. J. Tambimuttu; English Domestic Life during the Last 200 Years, compiled by L. A. G. Strong; and Life among the English, by Rose Macaulay. See also Gla(48), 4e(13).
- (52) 6 November 1942. Story by Five Authors. Fifth and last instalment. BBC Eastern Service. See also Gla(49).
- (53) 11 November 1942. Some Books: New Books—on Scented Dust, by Sir Firoz Khan Noon; Constituent Assembly for India, by N. Gangulee; The Managerial Revolution, by James Burnham; and The Weald of Youth, by Siegfried Sassoon. See also Gla(50), 4e(14).
- (54) 9 December 1942. Some Books—on *The Development of William Butler Yeats*, by V. K. Narayana Menon; and 'Little Gidding', by T. S. Eliot. *See also* C378 (An Indian on W. B. Yeats); Gla(51), 4e(15).
- (55) 25 December 1942. *Julius Caesar*. First in a series of talks for students of Calcutta University. BBC Eastern Service (Calling All Students). *See also* C379 (Why 'Julius Caesar' Lives); Gla(52).
- (56) 6 January 1943. Some Books: New Year's Greetings—mainly on the National Gallery, London. See also Gla(53), 4e(16).
- (57) 3 February 1943. Some Books—on The Screwtape Letters, by C. S. Lewis; Man the Master, by Gerald Heard; Letters on India, by Mulk Raj Anand; and Henry Ponsonby, Queen Victoria's Private Secretary: His Life from his Letters. See also Gla(54), 4e(17).
- (58) 3 March 1943. Some Books—on The Great God Pan, by Arthur Machen; Wife to Mr. Milton, by Robert Graves; The Cloven Pine, by

- Frank Clare; Day of the Trumpet, by David Cornel Dejon; and The Landslide, by Stephen Gilbert. See also Gla(55), 4e(18).
- (59) 11 March 1943. Tolstoy's Short Stories—variant of (50) above. In the series 'Books and People'. BBC African Service. See also B17; Gla(56).
- (60) 31 March 1943. Some Books—on Marcel Proust. See also C380 (The Second Greatest Novel?); Gla(57).
- (61) 28 April 1943. Some Books—on *Islam Today*, edited by A. J. Arberry and Rom Landau; *A White Man in Search of God*, by Ranjee Shahani; and *Hardy the Novelist*, by Lord David Cecil. *See also Gla*(58).
- (62) 26 May 1943. Some Books—on Beatrice Webb. See also A28 (Webb and Webb); Gla(59), 4e(19).
- (63) 20 June 1943. Some Books—on the stage productions of Love for Love, by William Congreve; La Malade imaginaire, by Molière; Heartbreak House, by G. B. Shaw; A Month in the Country, by Ivan Turgenev; and The Russian, by K. Simonov. See also Gla(60), 4e(20).
- (64) 18 July 1943. Some Books—on Report on the Constitutional Problem of India, by Reginald Coupland; Subject India, by H. N. Brailsford; Beggar my Neighbour, by Lionel Fielden; Hell in the Sunshine, by Cedric Dover; and Indian Crisis, by John Hoyland. See also Gla(61), 4e(21).
- (65) 15 August 1943. Some Books—on André Gide and Stefan George. See also C382 (Humanist and Authoritarian); Gla(62), 4e(22).
- (66) 12 September 1943. Some Books—on Literature and Authorship in India, by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar (see also B16); Monsoon, by B. Rajan; The Making of the Indian Princes, by Edward Thompson; The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, by Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt; and on the death of W. W. Jacobs. See also Gla(63).
- (67) 3 October 1943. Lytton Strachey—on his *Queen Victoria* and *Elizabeth and Essex*. Sixth in the series 'Modern Men of Letters'. BBC Eastern Service. *See also* Gla(64), 4e(23).
- (68) 10 October 1943. Some Books—on Report from Tokyo, by Joseph C. Grew; Tokyo Record, by Otto D. Tolischus; and Traveller from Tokyo, by John Morris. See also Gla(65).
- (69) 4 November 1943. Some Books—on Mark Twain. See also Gla(66), 4e(24).

- (70) 2 December 1943. Some Books—on *Echo and Ego*, by Roop and Mary Krishna; *Mr. Eliot's Penny World of Dreams*, by Ahmed Ali; *The Well of the People*, by Bharati Sarabhai; *Retreat with Stilwell*, by Jack Belden; *The Moon Rising*, by George Rodger; and *The Future of India*, by Reginald Coupland. *See also* Gla(67), 4e(25).
- (71) 30 December 1943. Some Books—on Laurence Binyon's death; prize-winning books in 1943: *Monkey*, by Wu Ch'eng-en, translated by Arthur Waley; *Henry Ponsonby*, *Queen Victoria's Private Secretary: His Life from his Letters*; and French literature. *See also* Gla(68), 4e(25.1).
- (72) 6 January 1944. [Matthew Arnold]—on Selections from Matthew Arnold's Poetry, edited by Ralph E. C. Houghton. First in the series 'Unwillingly to School'. BBC Eastern Service. See also (87) below; Gla(69).
- (73) 27 January 1944. Some Books—on Arrival and Departure, by Arthur Koestler; and Double Lives, by William Plomer. See also Gla(70).
- (74) 24 February 1944. Some Books—on James Joyce. See also Gla(71), 4e(26).
- (75) 23 March 1944. Some Books—on 'Is the Novel Dead?'. See also Gla(72), 4e(27).
- (76) 11 April 1944. Some Books—on Sense and Sensibility, by Jane Austen; Alun Lewis's death; Comedy in Chains, by Dennis Gray Stoll; Life's Shadows, by Kumara Guru; and L. H. Myers's death. See also Gla(73).
- (77) 17 April 1944. Books that Have Influenced Me—on *Erewhon*, by Samuel Butler. BBC Home Service. *See also* (81) below; C385 (Books in General—shortened version); Gla(74), 4e(28).
- (78) 9 May 1944. Some Books—on William Wordsworth. See also Gla(75), 4e(29).
- (79) 6 June 1944. Some Books: A Clash of Authority. See also C384 (extract); Gla(76).
- (80) 4 July 1944. Some Books—on *Strangers in India*, by Penderel Moon; *Indigo*, by Christine Weston; and other books. *See also* Gla(77), 4e(30).
- (81) 5 July 1944. Books that Have Influenced Me—shortened version of (77) above. BBC African Service. See also C385 (Books in General); Gla(78), 4e(31).
- (82) 1 August 1944. Some Books—on Put Out the Light, by Vercors; The Good Gorilla, by Arnold Lunn; Why Don't We Learn from

- History?, by B. H. Liddell Hart; and Mrs. Loveday, by Robert Goodyear. See also Gla(79), 4e(32).
- (83) 29 August 1944. Some Books—on Edward Carpenter's centenary. See also C387; Gla(80), 4e(33).
- (84) 25 September 1944. Book Talk—variant of (83) above. BBC Home Service. See also C387; Gla(81)
- (85) 26 September 1944. Some Books—on *Oakfield*, by William Arnold; and Matthew Arnold's poems on his brother. *See also* C389 (An Arnold in India); Gla(82).
- (86) 24 October 1944. Some Books—on An Approach to Tolstoy, by Janko Lavrin; and Everybody's Political What's What, by G. B. Shaw. See also Gla(83), 4e(34).
- (87) 16 November 1944. Text and Context [Matthew Arnold]—variant of (72) above. BBC Home Service. See also Gla(84).
- (88) 21 November 1944. Some Books—on the stage productions of *Richard III* and *Hamlet. See also* Gla(85).
- (89) 24 November 1944. The Art of Fiction. Eighth in the series 'English Prose'. BBC Eastern Service. See also Al2f; Gla(86).
- (90) 26 November 1944. Milton's "Areopagitica". BBC Home Service. See also C391 (A Tercentenary of Freedom); Gla(87). Repeated in the Eastern Service, 4 December.
- (91) 15 December 1944. The Short Story—on *The Salt of the Earth*, by Rebecca West; and *The Child of Queen Victoria*, by William Plomer. Eleventh in the series 'English Prose'. BBC Eastern Service. *See also Gla*(88), 4*e*(35).
- (92) 19 December 1944. Some Books—on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood; and other books on India. *See also* Gla(89), 4e(36).
- (93) 16 January 1945. Some Books: Romain Rolland—read by Philip Robinson as Forster was unwell. *See also* (95) below; C392; Gla(91), 4e(37).
- (94) 13 February 1945. Some Books—on African Trilogy, by Alan Moorehead; An Interlude in Spain, by Charles d'Ydewalle; and Army of Shadows, by Joseph Kettel. See also Gla(90), 4e(38).
- (95) 5 March 1945. Book Talk (Special): Romain Rolland and the Hero—variant of (93) above. BBC Home Service. See also C392; Gla(91).
- (96) 13 March 1945. Some Books—on *The Aesthetic Adventure*, by William Gaunt; *Persons and Places*, by George Santayana; *The Unquiet Grave*, by Palinurus, i.e. Cyril Connolly; and the film of

- Henry V. Forster was unable to give this talk owing to the death of his mother on 11 March. No script appears to survive. William Plomer 'spoke in his place' and said 'I have picked out some new books which I think he himself might have chosen.'
- (97) 10 April 1945. Some Books—on the film of *Henry V; Time Must Have a Stop*, by Aldous Huxley; and *For the Time Being*, by W. H. Auden. *See also Gla*(92), 4*e*(40).
- (98) 9 May 1945. Some Books—on Left Hand-Right Hand, by Sir Osbert Sitwell. See also Gla(93), 4e(41).
- (99) 5 June 1945. Some Books—on *The Lost Week-end*, by Charles Jackson; and *A House in Athens*, by Glenway Wescott. *See also* Gla(94), 4e(42).
- (100) 20 June 1945. Matthew Arnold. Nineteenth in the series 'The Written Word' and twelfth in the series 'The Development of Criticism'. BBC Eastern Service. See also Gla(95).
- (101) 3 July 1945. Some Books—on *Peter Grimes*, the opera by Benjamin Britten. *See also Gla*(96), 4*e*(43).
- (102) 31 July 1945. Some Books—on Paul Valéry; *The English Way*, by Pierre Maillaud; and *Tales of Jacob* and *The Young Joseph*, by Thomas Mann. *See also* Gla(97), 4e(44).
- (103) 28 August 1945. Some Books—on Animal Farm, by George Orwell. See also Gla(98), 4e(45).
- (104) 25 September 1945. Some Books—on Rudyard Kipling, by Hilton Brown; Steel Man in India, by John L. Keenan; and The Wide Net, by Eudora Welty. See also Gla(99).
- (105) 18 October 1945. The Artist in the Post-war World. All India Radio, Delhi. See also A31d; C393.1.
- (106) 12 November 1945. Does Writing Pay? All India Radio, Calcutta. See also A31d; G4e(46).
- (107) 18 November 1945. Broadcast while in Hyderabad. See 'Indian Journal: 1945', The Hill of Devi and Other Indian Writings, p. 267 (A31d).
- (108) 12 December 1945. Has India Changed? All India Radio, Bombay. No script survives but the talk may be similar to (110) and (111) below.
- (109) 18 January 1946. Talks for Sixth Forms: Tolstoy's 'War and Peace'—repeat of (13) above—not read by Forster. BBC Home Service (For the Schools). See also Gla(13).
- (110) 27 January 1946. Has India Changed? First of two talks comparing India of today with that of twenty-five years ago. BBC

- Home Service. See also C394 (India After Twenty-five years); Gla(100).
- (111) 3 February 1946. Has India Changed? Second of two talks. BBC Home Service. See also C394 (India After Twenty-five Years); Gla(101).
- (112) 27 March 1946. The Echoing Word. Second in this series of a 'selection of extracts from talks broadcast to West country listeners before the war' including 'T. E. Lawrence at Clouds Hill'—not read by Forster. West of England Home Service. See also (16) and (19) above; C319; Gla(102).
- (113) 7 April 1946. The Point of View of the Creative Artist. Fourth in the series 'The Challenge of Our Time'. BBC Home Service. See also (132) below; C395; F2d(4); Gla(103).
- (114) 8 May 1946. Book Talk: Iqbal, A Great Indian Poet-Philosopher. BBC Home Service. See also C396; F3d(14), (16); Gla(104), 4e(47).
- (115) 3 July 1946. Some Books—on *The Deliverance*, by Saratchandra Chatterji; *Epoch's End*, by Tarashankar Banerji; *Tales of Four Friends*, by Pramatha Chaudhuri; and other books from Bengal. *See also* F3d(15); Gla(105).
- (116) 31 July 1946. Some Books—on recent events in the literary world and the PEN Congress, Stockholm. *See also* C397 (Black List for Authors?—extract); Gla(106), 4e(48).
- (117) 28 August 1946. Some Books—on H. G. Wells's death; Milk of Paradise, by Forrest Reid; and The Scarlet Tree, by Sir Osbert Sitwell. See also Gla(107), 4e(49).
- (118) 20 November 1946. Some Books—on European Witness, by Stephen Spender; and Cult of Power, by Rex Warner. See also Gla(108), 4e(50).
- (119) 18 December 1946. Some Books—on The Dove Found No Rest, by Dennis Gray Stoll; and Letters from John Chinaman, by G. L. Dickinson. See also Gla(109).
- (120) 15 January 1947. Some Books—on History of Western Philosophy, by Bertrand Russell. See also Gla(110).
- (121) 12 February 1947. Some Books—on Billy Budd, by Herman Melville; A Distant Summer, by Edith Saunders; and War in Val d'Oreia, by Iris Origo. See also Gla(111).
- (122) 12 March 1947. Some Books—on The Writer's Responsibility, by J. Donald Adam; and Democracy and the Arts, by Rupert Brooke. See also Gla(112), 4e(51).

- (123) 15 August 1947. Message to India—greetings to the new India and Pakistan. BBC Eastern Service. See also Gla(113).
- (124) 31 August 1947. American Impressions. BBC Home Service. See also C401 (Impressions of the United States); F2d(5); Gla(114). Repeated in the Pacific Service, 5 September and in the Third Programme, 12 October.
- (125) 24 September 1947. Some Books: Literature in India. No script appears to survive. See also C402 (extract).
- (126) 13 April 1948. It's Good English—on a passage from *The Life of George Crabbe*, by his son. BBC Far Eastern Service. *See also* Gla(115), 4e(52).
- (127) 20 June 1948. The Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts. BBC Third Programme. See also C406 (Looking Back at the Aldeburgh Festival); Gla(116).
- (128) 4 November 1948. On Criticism in the Arts, especially Music—version of the address delivered at the Harvard University Symposium on Music. Sixth in the series 'Writers and Music'. BBC Third Programme. See also C399; F2d(7); Gla(117). Repeated in the Third Programme, 22 March 1949.
- (129) 11 January 1949. I Speak for Myself. First in the series with this title. BBC Far Eastern Service. See also F2d(8); Gla(118), 4e(53). Repeated in the Third Programme, 11 March and in the North American Service.
- (130) 23 January 1949. Entrance to an Unwritten Novel—the introductory and closing paragraphs were also spoken by Forster. To mark his 70th birthday. BBC Third Programme. See also C409; F2d(9); Gla(119).
 - Repeated in the Third Programme, 8 February and in the European and North American Services.
- (131) 22 March 1949. Bookshelves of a Lover of Words. Third in the series 'In My Library'. BBC General Overseas Service. See also C412; F2b(1), d(10); Gla(120).
 Repeated in the Third Programme as 'In My Library', 3 July.
- (132) 10 August 1950. The Challenge of Our Time—variant of (113) above. In the series 'Famous Writers'. BBC Pacific Service. See also C395; Gla(103).
- (133) 6 December 1950. John Skelton—version of a lecture given at the Aldeburgh Festival. BBC Third Programme. See also A28; F2d(11); Gla(121). Repeated in the Third Programme, 3 February 1951.
- (134) 16 June 1951. The [Fourth] Aldeburgh Festival-read by a

- member of the staff as Forster had broken his ankle. In the series 'Saturday Review'. BBC General Overseas Service (London Calling Asia). See also Gla(122), 4e(54).
- (135) 29 September 1951. The Fifth Anniversary of the Third Programme. BBC Third Programme. See also C428; F2d(12); Gla(123).

Repeated in the Third Programme, 1 October.

(136) 8 June 1952. The Butler Legacy. First in a series, other contributors were Graham Hough and Philip Toynbee. BBC Third Programme. See also C433; Gla(124).

A revised version was recorded for the BBC Transcription Ser-

vice (see F2b(2)).

- (137) 22 June 1952. Tribute to Sir Desmond MacCarthy. The other contributors were Sir Max Beerbohm, V. S. Pritchett, Philip Hope-Wallace, and C. V. Wedgwood. BBC Home Service. See also C434; F2d(14); Gla(125).
- (138) 6 September 1953. Book Review: The Pelican History of Art. BBC Third Programme. See also C441 (The Art and Architecture of India); Gla(126).
- (139) 29 October 1954. Revolution at Bayreuth. BBC Third Programme. See also C449; F2d(15); Gla(127).
- (140) 14 February 1955. [Review of] *The Mint*, by T. E. Lawrence. BBC Third Programme. *See also* C455; F2d(16); Gla(128), 4e(55). Repeated in the Third Programme, 20 February.
- (141) 14 July 1955. Introduction: Aldeburgh Festival, 1955—recorded for the BBC Transcription Service in English. The programmes broadcasting this item have not been traced.
- (142) 5 October 1956. Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson—introduction to a shortened version of Dickinson's A Modern Symposium broadcast on 6 October. BBC Third Programme. See also C465 (A Great Humanist); Gla(129).
- (143) 28 December 1958. Recollections of Nassenheide. BBC Third Programme. See also C493; F2d(19); Gla(130).
- (144) 20 January 1960. George Crabbe and Aldeburgh—new reading of (27) above. Third in the series of 'The Poetry of Place'. BBC General Overseas Service (English Talks for Asia). See also C365; F2b(5), d(20); Gla(131). Repeated in the Third Programme as 'The Poetry of Place', 24

January in the interval of the Peter Grimes broadcast.

(145) 7 May 1961. Impressions of Rabindranath Tagore—tribute on the centenary of his birth. All India Radio, Delhi. See also A31d; G4e(56).

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Gyre and Vortex: W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound

COLIN McDowell
AND
TIMOTHY MATERER

Critics of modern poetry have too often treated W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound as the poetic opposites of modern literature. In this view, Yeats is the "last romantic," who took the poetry of mysticism and archetypal symbol to a brilliant extreme in English literature; Pound is the poet of the precise image, who believed that "the natural object is always the adequate symbol" and who scorned the Romantic age as a "blurry, messy sort of a period." Pound himself initiated this kind of contrast when he wrote of Ford Madox Ford (Hueffer) in 1913:

Mr. Hueffer's beliefs about the art [of poetry] may be best explained by saying that they are in diametric opposition to those of Mr. Yeats. Mr. Yeats has been subjective; believes in the glamour and associations which hang near the words. . . . Mr. Hueffer believes in an exact rendering of things.

Pound indicates which side of the opposition he is on when he writes in the same passage that Yeats's poetic method is "very dangerous" and that he would rather "talk about poetry with Ford Madox Hueffer than with any man in London."²

This 1913 statement is strengthened by the famous description of Yeats in the 1948 Pisan Cantos:

and Uncle William dawdling around Notre Dame in search of whatever

Paused to admire the symbol with Notre Dame standing inside it Whereas in St. Etienne or why not Dei Miracoli:

mermaids, that carving...³

(LXXXIII/528-29)

Like the great symbolist poet he was, Yeats is "in search" of correspondences in the outer world for an inner reality. The "whatever" in Yeats's mind might be the archetype of the Mother Goddess or a theory about the medieval age. The reality of the cathedral is meaningless to Yeats unless it interprets or corresponds to an inner, spiritual reality. Pound's implied criticism is that the "whatever" discovered by "dawdling" is not precise enough to achieve an "exact rendering of the thing." He suspects that Yeats imposes rather than discovers poetic form. The criticism is extended by relating Yeats to the gothic structure of Notre Dame Cathedral (Ford thought Yeats was a great poet but a "gargoyle") and contrasting it with Santa Maria Dei Miracoli in Venice, where the stone carvings of mermaids or sirens have the naturalness and precision he also praises in Canto LXXVII:

and Tullio Romano carved the sirenes as the old custode says: so that since then no one has been able to carve them for the jewel box, Santa Maria Dei Miracoli....

(LXXVI/460)

The critics of both Pound and Yeats have drawn the nearly irresistible conclusion that Pound intends from his characterization of Yeats. Commenting on the Notre Dame passage, Richard Ellmann writes that "From Pound's point of view, symbols interfered with experience instead of letting experience coalesce into its natural pattern. . . . He ironically suggests that Mary's presence is diminished rather than enhanced by the symbolic portentousness of her cathedral." This analysis leads Ellmann to a perceptive but excessively sharp contrast of the poets:

Both writers agreed that they lived in an age of decline.... For Yeats the cure was to condense and arrange experience. Pound thought this procedure could only lead to premature synthesis, born from an insufficient "phalanx of particulars." For Pound, the cure was to probe, experiment, accumulate until things—some things at any rate—shone with their intrinsic light: Yeats thought such experimentation might reach no end. Pound's view of experience is as "improvisatory," as informalist, as Yeats's is formalist.⁴

Pound's best critics agree with Ellmann. Hugh Kenner's reading of the Notre Dame passage also contrasts Pound's "exact rendering" of experience with Yeats's symbolism: "Yeats' incorrigibly symbologizing mind infected much of his verse with significance imposed on materials by an effort of will ('artificiel'). . . . "5 Donald Davie writes that Kenner's remark "makes the essential point" and adds, "Yeats can see Notre Dame

as an artifact, a presence created in masonry and sculpture, only inside the symbol, only for the sake of what it answers to in him, not for what it is in itself."6

Many critics have contributed to furthering this misapprehension of Yeats's relationship with Pound. In one of the few thorough studies of Pound and Yeats, Thomas Parkinson concluded that a "sharp fundamental opposition of temperament and interests doomed them to ultimate disagreement." In his fine biography of Yeats, Frank Tuohy claims that "Pound looked askance at Yeats's occult interests," and a recent book on Yeats similarly claims that Pound thought that "Yeats's philosophical and occult ideas were silly" and one on Pound that "the poet is not committed to occult study as Yeats is." In his studies of the Cantos, Forrest Read writes that Pound's "myth could not be personal, like Yeats's, but had to be an historic myth like the Renaissance tradition." Such judgments are misleading because both poets were in fact deeply committed to occult studies and both attempted to go beyond merely personal versions of myth to find the recurrent patterns that underlie all myths.

When Pound sought out Yeats as the greatest living English poet, with the ambition of "learning how Yeats did it," he was not merely impressed by Yeats's poetic technique.¹⁰ Echoes of Yeats in his early poems, as in "The Tree," with its echo of Yeats's "He Thinks of His Past Greatness," are of mystical themes as well as diction and rhythm:

Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood And many a new thing understood That was rank folly to my head before.¹¹

The publication of Pound's letters to Dorothy Shakespeare from the 1909–14 period demonstrates how interested Pound was in Yeatsian theosophical circles, which included not only Pound's future wife but also Yeats's, as well as his enthusiasm for the works of Madame Blavatsky's associate, G. R. S. Mead.¹² Yeats was so commanding a figure that it is no wonder that Pound attempted to distinguish his work from the older poet's to protect his individuality. But throughout their careers they were profoundly united by their common approach to the material of the poet, the image, especially those images that derive from mystical or occult traditions.

Their interest in the traditions of mysticism was guided by a profound investigation of the way the poet's mind is able to apprehend a reality that goes beyond ordinary perception. Pound's epistemology, informal though it was, was firmly grounded in the work of the Christian mystic Richard St. Victor.

In Guide to Kulchur Pound refers us to Richard St. Victor's tripartite division of modes of thought, "cogitation, meditation and contemplation": "In the first the mind flits aimlessly about the object, in the second it circles about it in a methodical manner, in the third it is united with the object." Pound's critics have applied this scheme to Pound's poetry, and James Wilhelm usefully summarizes some of the alternative triads which may be applied to the Cantos. These include the ephemeral, the recurrent, and the eternal, and Erigena's threefold division of nature into: 1. Hyle-Dianoia or Matter-senses; 2. Logos or Reason; and 3. Nous or Spirit. As Wilhelm suggests, these divisions can be "linked" with each other without any difficulty, and Pound most probably did link them. What Pound does not do is organize his insights into a monolithic system like Yeat's A Vision. He touches on them in his prose and in the Cantos, but he allows his readers to draw their own conclusions.

In the first edition of A Vision (1925), Yeats wrote that his book embodied a system of thought "that would leave my imagination free to create as it chose and yet make all that it created, or could create, part of the one history, and that the soul's." It would be an original but not merely personal system: "The Greeks certainly had such a system, and Dante ... and I think no man since."15 In the second edition of A Vision, Yeats expressed the same point in a different manner: his system allowed him "to hold in a single thought reality and justice."16 Even that which is "out of phase" is given its reasons. Yeats's world is accordingly more tolerant, theoretically, than a world in which some people and actions are damned as merely "ephemeral," or as "aimless." There is no Hell in Yeats, although "Purgatory" may seem like Hell to those who cannot comprehend the purpose for which we exist, defined in "Under Ben Bulben" as "Profane perfection of mankind." A parallel idea of comprehended purpose occurs in late Pound, in Women of Trachis, with the insight of the dying Herakles, expressed as "what / SPLENDOUR, / IT ALL COHERES." That few of Yeats's readers can find this sort of insight in A Vision does not affect the point that it exists to express such an insight. Yeats's statements about A Vision all stress that it gave him comfort and even joy, although he could not hope it would similarly comfort his readers.

Their attempt to distinguish the permanent from the accidental leads both poets to certain kinds of images or image clusters. In his essay "Bishop Berkeley," Yeats defines two of his major symbols when he writes of his sense "for what is permanent, as distinct from what is useful, for what is unique and different, for the truth that shall prevail,

for what antiquity called the sphere as distinct from the gyre..."

Yeats here parallels Pound on Richard St. Victor. The "sphere" is analogous to the eternal or divine spirit in Pound's poetic world, as in his description of one of the fugal themes of the Cantos, the "bust thru from quotidien into 'divine or permanent world.' Gods, etc."

We can also see that a gyre or spiral may be thought of as a figure for the methodical examination of an object: one starts out with a wide circle of perception, in which one grasps the gestalt, gradually narrowing one's focus. Another way of looking at "meditation," in Richard's sense, is to say that one might begin with concentration on a single part of an object and gradually widen one's focus until the whole object is seen at a glance. Since both methods of "meditation" lead to the dissolution of the sense of separateness from what is perceived, they each give rise to unification with an object; and they both, of course, prevent "dawdling" around one.

As Yeats tells us, the symbols of gyre and sphere come from "antiquity." Books like G. R. Levy's *The Gate of Horn* and Robert Graves's *The White Goddess* have familiarized us with the megalithic spiral, but Yeats is referring to the ancient Greeks. James Olney has demonstrated that Yeats derived much of his knowledge of the pre-Socratics from the first edition of John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*. ²¹ A Vision itself fits more precisely into the neo-Platonic school, but Yeats begins his exposition with Empedocles and refers liberally to Heraclitus. In the first edition of A Vision he stated that his system enabled him to "explain much in Parmenides and Empedocles," but characteristically he then quoted a long passage from Empedocles, crediting it to Heraclitus and giving "Birkett" rather than Burnet as his source. ²² Nevertheless, it is suggestive that Pound's speculations about the "vortex" may also have derived from Burnet. ²³

Both Pound and Yeats use gyre and sphere images in their poetry. Although Yeats's use of the gyre is news to no one, few critics seem able to take that use seriously enough. It is easy to see the gyre image in Yeats's poetry as a piece of window dressing, a gesture toward an occult symbology. In later life Yeats went back to the poem "The Two Trees" and added the phrase "Gyring, spiring to and fro" (*P*, p. 48), and to many readers this seems a gratuitous addition. There are also problems with the most famous usage of the gyres, in "The Second Coming":

Turning and turning in the widening gyre The falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things fall apart. . . .

(P, p. 187)

Here, the image seems justified more by the relentlessness of the motion, its sheer portentousness, rather than by any theory of historical ages. However, one of Yeats's most unpromising uses of the gyre symbolism leads us to the heart of what he meant by it. In "Meditations in Time of Civil War," the sphere and its gyres are lightly suggested in the lines, "The Primum Mobile that fashioned us / Has made the very owls in circles move . . ." (P, p. 203). The term "Primum Mobile" is one of Yeats's frequent references to Platonism and the Ptolemaic system. In "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" we are told:

So the Platonic Year Whirls out new right and wrong, Whirls in the old instead. . . . (P, p. 208)

In "His Bargain," "Plato's spindle" is mentioned: "Who talks of Plato's spindle; / What set it whirling round?" (P, p. 263). Fully to explicate these poems we would need to look at A Vision, where Yeats explains how all things fulfill their allotted places in the unfolding of the universe: the "final" cycle is the Platonic Year, with all the little cycles which make it up as the whirling gyres. But the most syncretic and illuminating usage of this cosmological image in the poetry is in the first stanza of the gnomic poem "Veronica's Napkin":

The Heavenly Circuit; Berenice's Hair; Tent-pole of Eden; the tent's drapery; Symbolical glory of the earth and air! The Father and His angelic hierarchy That made the magnitude and glory there Stood in the circuit of a needle's eye.

(P, p. 239)

Here, the encompassing "Primum Mobile" of the other poems is replaced by a different yet similar symbol, the pole around which everything revolves. The pole is itself unmoving, like the Primum Mobile. In Yeats's terminology, it is "unique and different," but Plato calls it "the Same," and looks on the gyres as being expressive of "the Different." "Plato's spindle" is of course derived from the Vision of Er in *The Republic*.

F. A. C. Wilson has drawn together many of these strands in Yeats's poetry in his commentary on the poem "Chosen," a poem in which Yeats symbolizes his version of Richard St. Victor's final meditative state as the condition where the struggles "on the track / Of the whirling Zodiac" find their resolution in a "sphere" (P, p. 272). Wilson explains that the phrase "The Heavenly Circuit" used by Yeats in

"Veronica's Napkin" is the title of an essay by Plotinus. One of the passages from this essay quoted by Wilson is reminiscent of Pound's quotation from Richard St. Victor:

"The Soul exists in revolution around God to whom it clings in love, holding itself to the utmost of its power near to Him as the being on which all depends; and since it cannot coincide with God it circles about Him." ²⁴

One might think that a poet like Yeats would demur about the limitation placed here upon the capabilities of the soul, but in fact he usually seems to think of union with God as something to be striven for rather than attained. Richard Ellmann perceptively remarks that Yeats only occasionally mentions the sphere in his verse "because it had come to seem a remoter ideal" than it had been in Yeats's youth, when he often used its equivalent symbol, the rose. There is however one very prominent use of the sphere in Yeats's mature poetry. This is in "Among School Children," where Plato is once again mentioned:

.... it seemed that our two natures blent Into a sphere from youthful sympathy, Or else, to alter Plato's parable, Into the yolk and white of the one shell.

(P, p. 216).

As Patrick J. Keane has demonstrated, the immediate stimulus for this image was provided by an alchemical tract by John Dee; but it has long been recognized that the "yolk and white" are parallel images to sun and moon, respectively, and hence refer to Yeats's *primary* and *antithetical* in A Vision. 26

The gyre and sphere are two of Yeats's "masterful images," but they are subsumed in a still grander image, the Sephirothic Tree of Life from the Kabbalistic tradition, which was the central, organizing image of Yeats's order of the Golden Dawn.²⁷ In Illustration A, the small circles represent the Sephiroth, the potencies of being. The black and white pillars are the pillars of Mercy and Severity, which are resolved in the central pillar. Eve represents the lunar parts of the mind and Adam the solar parts. Roughly, we might say that Eve is the unconscious, Adam the conscious mind. The Primum Mobile at the top of the figure is the union of solar and lunar and represents the higher aspirations of the soul. After the Fall, the dragon at Eve's feet ascends the Tree, winding around the Sephiroth and troubling the prior calm. "The Poet Pleads with the Elemental Powers" (P, p. 72) refers us to the "Polar Dragon," and "He Thinks of His Past Greatness When a Part of

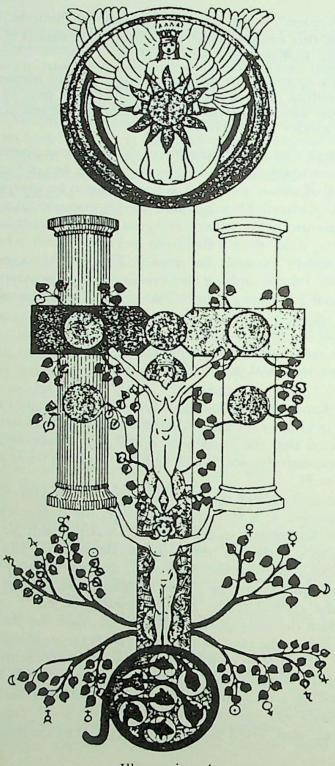


Illustration A

the Constellations of Heaven" (P, p. 73) situates the "Pilot Star" in the leaves of the Celtic Tree of Life, a hazel-tree.

"The Two Trees" is of course based on the symbolism of the Tree of Life because the dragon-heads at Eve's feet in the Golden Dawn diagram also represent an inverted Tree of Life. From the orthodox point of view, this inverted Tree is evil, but from the initiated point of view it represents the chthonic or ophidian powers that must be summoned up and controlled by the adept. It is thus equivalent to the Yogic Serpent Power or Kundalini, in which the sleeping power at the base of the spine is awakened by meditation, so that it ascends the spine in a spiral path to the head, rousing the various spiritual centers or chakras on its way.²⁸ To climb the Tree of Life is thus to embark on a spiritual journey and eliminate the state in which "the mind flits aimlessly."

The "Tent-pole of Eden" is a variant of the Tree in the Garden, as is the tree in "Vacillation," which is "half all glittering flame and half all green / Abounding foliage" (P, p. 250). Alternatively, if we think of the Tree of Life after the Fall, we have "Those branches of the night and day" and the "Lethean foliage" of the same poem (P, pp. 252, 250). In "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," it is a dragon image which introduces "the Platonic Year." The Platonic Year whirls man in and out of incarnation just as Loie Fuller's dancers whirl a piece of cloth to suggest the movements of a dragon (P, p. 209). "Ribh Denounces Patrick" tells how "juggling nature mounts," identifying nature with the "mirrorscaled serpent" and with "multiplicity," or the differentiation of subject from object (P, p. 285). "Her Triumph" speaks of the "dragon-rings" from which we must be freed (P, p. 272). Other uses of the Tree of Life symbolism are not so obvious. Mountain symbolism, as in "Meru," is related to this tree imagery; and as the poem "Under the Round Tower" shows, Yeats's tower symbolism and his "winding stair" are part of the same image complex. A poem like "Sailing to Byzantium" or "Old Tom Again" uses the image of "sailing" as a variant of the ascent or descent of the Tree. This is not strange when we recall that Plato's Man of Er imaged his spindle and the surrounding heavens as an inverted trireme. "Byzantium" itself uses the image of the sea to represent the gyres, while the great dome approximates the sphere. The "perne in a gyre" motion of the earlier poem becomes, in "Byzantium," the more homely image of "Hades' bobbin" which "May unwind the winding path" (P, p. 248).

This symbolic complex is as natural to Ezra Pound's poetic universe as it is to Yeats's. Pound used the gyre image in the 1908 poem

"Plotinus": "As one that would draw thru the node of things, / Back sweeping to the vortex of the cone. . . ." And "Histrion" offers an early version of the sphere:

'Tis as in midmost us there glows a sphere Translucent, molten gold, that is the "I" And into this some form projects itself....²⁹

"Before Sleep" contains lines descriptive of gyres that are almost as geometric as something out of *A Vision*, while "A Song of the Degrees" mentions "the golden disc"; but the most important use of gyre and sphere before the *Cantos* occurs in the poem "Phanopoeia," with its "swirl of light" and "silver ball" and the following lines:

The swirling sphere has opened and you are caught up to the skies. You are englobed in my sapphire.

Io! Io!

And, most particularly:

AOI!
The whirling tissue of light
is woven and grows solid beneath us;
The sea-clear sapphire of air, the sea-dark clarity,
stretches both sea-cliff and ocean.³⁰

The Cantos develop this imagery as Pound searches for permanent forms within the seeming chaos of nature and history. Canto I begins with the prospect of a sea voyage through "spiteful Neptune," but soon we see "waves taking form" in Canto II: "And So-shu churned in the sea, So-shu also, / using the long moon for a churn-stick. . . ." (II/9). There has been much controversy about So-shu, but he or she is best regarded, in the words of Forrest Read, as "a Chinese demiurge," who churns waves to make a vortex.31 As such, So-shu joins the complex of images centered around the pole-star. In Indian myth, the sea is churned to gain the elixir, generating at the same time the constellations from chaos, as in the Mahabharata (see Illustration B), where a serpent, emblem of spiral motion, is fittingly used to turn the axis. In Canto XXV, the waves become crystal, and form into a crystal sphere: "and saw the waves taking form as crystal" (XXV/118). The actual conversion is first suggested in Canto LXXVI, although earlier we have heard of "NOUS, the ineffable crystal" (XL/201), and seen "the bright ball that the fountain tosses" (LXXIV/449). The phrase "no cloud, but the crystal body" (LXXVI/457) joins with "the sphere moving crystal, fluid" (LXXVI/457), "the crystalline, as inverse of water"

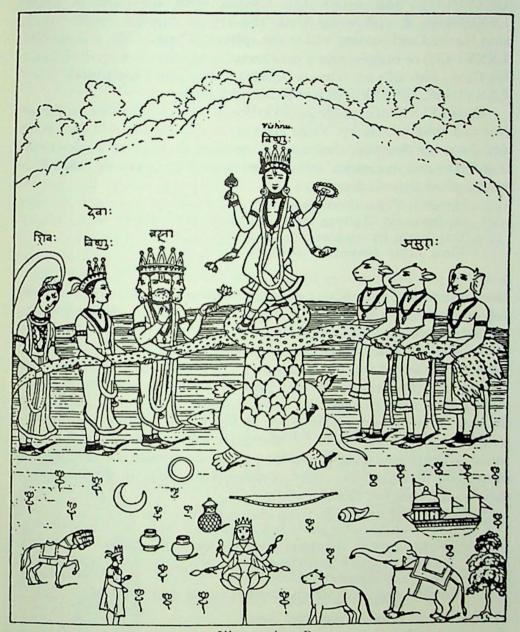


Illustration B

The "incomparably mighty churn" of the Sea of Milk, as described in the Mahobharata and Ramayama. The heads of the deities on the right are the Asura, with unmistakable "Typhonian" characteristics. They stand for the same power as the Titans, the Turanians, and the people of Untamo, in short, the "family" of the bad uncle, among whom Seth is the oldest representative, pitted against Horus, the avenger of his father Osiris.

(LXXVI/457), "and within the crystal, went up swift as Thetis" (LXXVI/459). Pound writes that "the crystal can be weighed in the hand / formal and passing within the sphere: Thetis, / Maya, 'Αφροδίτη" (LXXVI/459) to suggest that a process is being consummated. In fact, as this Canto also tells us, what is being accomplished is a union, "atasal" (LXXVI/458, 459), although it is not complete.

Canto XIX confirms the importance of Yeats's influence on Pound's gyre and sphere imagery. Yeats appears in this Canto as "Lusty Juventus." Juventus describes the "replica" or mental image of Yeats's system of interpenetrating cones, which represent the dynamics both of the mind and of historical cycles:

He said: "Ten thousand years before now ... Or he said: "Passing into the point of the cone You begin by making the replica. Thus Lusty Juventus, in September. . . .

(XIX/142)

The ideas of the eternally young Juventus are declaimed in a setting that contrasts his vitality to the moribund society which ignores him: "the residence of the funeral director" and "the lawn of the senior elder." He explicates ideas that are crucial both to Pound and Yeats: "'Matter is the lightest of all things. . . . whirled in the aether'" and "Light also proceeds from the eye. . . ," which recalls Pound on the early Italian Renaissance: "the radiant world where one thought cuts through another with clean edge, a world of moving energies ... magnetisms that take form ... the glass under water, the form that seems a form seen in a mirror. . . ."32 The conclusion of Juventus' disquisition describes the effect of a mystical sphere in the same terms that Pound uses in "Phanopoeia":

"Light also proceeds from the eye;

"In the globe over my head

"Twenty feet in diameter, thirty feet in diameter

"Glassy, the glaring surface-"There are many reflections

"So that one may watch them turning and moving...." (XIX/143)

Although there may be some satire on Yeats's pedantic precision in the specification of the exact diameter of the enlarging sphere, this passage and the entire Canto are a tribute to Yeats's continuing vitality. Even though Juventus is apparently in the "September" of his years, he is more vital than the other major poet in this Canto, "Arnaut." Arnaut is a satiric portrait of T. S. Eliot, with whom Pound visited the Provençal

castle of Excideuil in 1919. Arnaut is also associated with spiral imagery, but Pound implies that he is not able to grasp its significance:

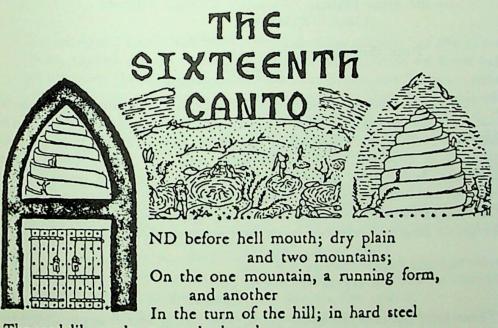
So Arnaut turned there
Above him the wave pattern cut in the stone
Spire-top alevel the well-curb
And the tower with cut stone above that, saying:

"I am afraid of the life after death."

(XIX/145)

A photograph of the wave pattern is reproduced in Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era.* ³³ It stands here for the kind of elemental image, like the spire-top and tower of the castle, that Yeats and Pound are quick to recognize. Arnaut, on the contrary, with no understanding of the Yeatsian cycles of the soul, is preoccupied with the fear of death. We will see a similarly favorable judgment on Yeats's vitality and perceptiveness in Canto CXIII.

Like Yeats, Pound uses the image of the gyre or spiral not only as a general symbol of spiritual development but also to indicate his own spiritual progress. We see the gyre as a Yeatsian "winding stair" in the opening of Canto XVI, especially if we see it in context with Henry Strater's illustration of the Canto in the 1925 A Draft of XVI Cantos:



The road like a slow screw's thread,
The angle almost imperceptible,
so that the circuit seemed hardly to rise

As in Dante, the ascent from Hell is by a spiral path.

A spiral flight out of a spiritual hell also occurs in one of the great passages in the late Cantos. Amid references to Chinese, Manichean, and Mithraic religious rites. Pound in Canto XC describes his release from despair through the agency of a feminine creative force.³⁴ This force is named Isis Kuanon in a double reference to the Egyptian goddess Isis and the Chinese Buddhist god of mercy Kuan-Yin. The refrain of the following passage, "m'elevasti" ("you have raised me"), is based on Dante's grateful acknowledgment to Beatrice in Canto I of the Paradiso (line 75): "mi levasti" ("you raised me"). Pound's Beatrice is referred to by the Latin word for a prophetess, Sibylla:

Sibylla,

from under the rubble heap m'elevasti from the dulled edge beyond pain, m'elevasti out of Erebus, the deep-lying from the wind under the earth. m'elevasti from the dulled air and the dust m'elevasti

by the great flight,

m'elevasti. Isis Kuanon from the cusp of the moon m'elevasti. . . . (XC/606)

On the surface of these beautiful lines, nothing suggests the spiral nature of the ascent from the "deep-lying" hell. Yet the spiral pattern is inherent within the experience narrated, even though it is not expressed as explicitly as it might have been by Yeats. The pattern becomes clearer near the end of Canto XC, when the spiral path is marked out amid references to the freeing of two characters from the Greek underworld, Tyro and Alcmene, together with an allusion to the knights (i cavalieri) referred to in the Purgatorio (Canto XIV, line 109):

Thick smoke, purple, rising bright flame now on the altar the crystal funnel of air.... (XC/608)

These lines indicate the spiral path. The rising ascent is paralleled by the movement of the "blue serpent," which glides from its "rock pool." Pound uses the serpent image much as Yeats does in "The Poet Pleads with the Elemental Powers." In Yeats's poem, the poet laments that the

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serpent who guards the pole or pivot of the universe is unable to guard his Beloved:

And though the Seven Lights bowed in their dance and wept, The Polar Dragon slept,
His heavy rings uncoiled from glimmering deep to deep:
When will he wake from sleep?
(P, p. 72)

In Canto XCI, however, the intervention of the Sibylla enables the viper and blue serpent to stir into new life. If we assume that Pound is alluding to the Serpent Power and its arousal as a sign of spiritual illumination, we can explain this passage and two others in the following Canto. Canto XCI juxtaposes natural and spiritual fecundity with one of the most resonant native British myths:

Nor Constance hath his hood again
Merlin's fader may no man know
Merlin's moder is made a nun
Lord, thaet scop the dayes lihte,
all that she knew was a spirit bright,
A movement that moved in cloth of gold
into her chamber.

"By the white dragon, under a stone
Merlin's fader is known to none."

(XCI/613)

The "dragon" here, like the viper and "blue serpent" of the previous Canto, represents the dormant energies which come up from below, but the color "blue" is also that of the sky, so that the following passage from the Canto represents a union of earth and sky: "The natrix glides sapphire into the rock pool. / NUTT overarching. . . ." (XCI/616). One would expect "glides" to be an intransitive verb, but it works here partly transitively: the "sapphire" of the pool has been donated to it by the natrix. "NUTT" is the Egyptian goddess Nut, whose body stretches above the earth in an arc from horizon to horizon. The two lines in Pound thus describe the serpentine swirl of the rock-pool surmounted by the hemisphere of the heavens: a neat tableau of the two symbols that are so basic to Pound and Yeats.

In Canto CVI Pound returns to the spiral ascent of his goddesses and queens. Selena, goddess of the moon, and Arsinoe, an Egyptian Queen,³⁵ are set amid imagery that implies this ascent:

Buck stands under ash grove, jasmine twines over capitals Selena Arsinoe So late did queens rise into heaven. (CVI/755)

A more explicit spiral pattern than the twirling jasmine appears a few lines later in a passage that asserts the creativeness of the poetic mind. Like the English Romantics, Pound uses moonlight to prefigure the coming solar revelation, the power of the mind ("God's eye") to perceive meaning and beauty. The sun's reflected light, as Selena, reveals the "wave-swirl" in the sea, the proportions of colonnades and trees, and the beauty of the ritual dance ("Xoroi"):

Selena, foam on the wave-swirl
Out of gold light flooding the peristyle
Trees open in Paros,
White feet as Carrara's whiteness
In Xoroi.

God's eye art 'ou.

Ritual dances often take spiral forms, as Robert Graves has stressed, and as Pound knew, to judge from the line "to reign, to dance in a maze" (CXIV/793).

Cantos XCI and CVI also pick up the imagery of "the sphere moving crystal, fluid" that had earlier achieved fullest expression in Canto LXXVI. Canto XCI begins by beseeching "that the body of light come forth / from the body of fire" (XCI/610), and the poet is rewarded by the appearance of "The GREAT CRYSTAL," with the "Crystal waves weaving together toward the gt / healing" (XCI/611), where "healing" is used with reference to its meaning "to make whole," that is, to join the solar and lunar parts of mankind. A note on terminology in Ta Hsio: The Great Digest is relevant here, especially as the Chinese character occurs often in the Cantos:



The sun and moon, the total light process, the radiation, reception and reflection of light; hence, the intelligence. Bright, brightness, shining. Refer to Scotus Erigena, Grosseteste and the notes on light in my Cavalcanti. 36

In Canto CVI, Pound characterizes this union of sun and moon as "That great acorn of light bulging outward" (CVI/755), where the lunar acorn reflects the solar sunlight, or (slightly differently) the earthy acorn is united with the paternal sky. In later Cantos, the image is referred to simply as "the ball of fire" (CVIII/764), but its culmination occurs in Canto CXVI:

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I have brought the great ball of crystal; who can lift it? Can you enter the great acorn of light? (CXVI/795)

The reference here is to the *Cantos* themselves, as several critics have noted; but it also must be to the vision of coherence which Pound has discovered through his poem, and which he believes is valid for his readers as well, if only they can follow him: "These concepts the human mind has attained. / To make Cosmos—" (CXVI/795). The hesitancy of Pound here parallels that of Yeats, when he writes, in the first edition of *A Vision*, that "the day is far off when the two halves of man can define each its own unity in the other as in a mirror, Sun in Moon, Moon in Sun, and so escape out of the Wheel."³⁷ In Yeats's technical language, this means to go beyond the realm of the *Faculties*, the whirling gyres of *Will, Mask, Creative Mind*, and *Body of Fate*, to the realm of the *Principles*, which are "in reality a sphere, though to Man, bound to birth and death, it can never seem so."³⁸

Readers of A Vision generally know more about the Great or Lunar Wheel, the realm of the gyres, than about Principles. This is not surprising because Yeats is closer to the phenomenal world, which can be put into concrete imagery, than to the spiritual, where one is "Struck dumb in the simplicity of fire!" (P, p. 252). Interestingly, Pound too has his parallel to Yeats's "circle of the moon / That pitches common things about" (P, p. 207). This image usually occurs in conjunction with the word "Fortuna": "all under the Moon is under Fortuna" (XCVII/656); "all neath the moon, under Fortuna" (XCVII/676); "above the moon there is order, / beneath the Moon, forsitan" (XCVII/677); "Earth under fortuna, / Each sphere hath its Lord, / with ever-shifting change, sempre biasmata" (XCVII/677); and

Winnowed in fate's tray



neath luna



(CXII/785).

As the phrase "Each sphere hath its Lord" reminds us, both Pound and Yeats employed the Ptolemaic system for their own purposes. That Pound most probably derived his use from Dante, and Yeats from his readings in astrology and the Neoplatonists, does not affect the point that their final uses of the system are virtually identical. In Pound's Cantos, the movement of the stars in the sky is often equated with

"periplum," the act of sailing after knowledge, as in "the great periplum brings in the stars to our shore" (LXXIV/425), or "under the gray cliff in periplum / the sun dragging her stars" (LXXIV/431), or "the sun in his great periplum / leads in his fleet here" (LXXVI/452). Those who "have passed the pillars and outward from Herakles" (LXXIV/425) are the initiates of occult lore. The image of passing through the pillars (the straits of Gibraltar) might be drawn directly from the ritual of Yeats's Order of the Golden Dawn, as the image of "The banners of East and West" is in Yeats's "He Hears the Cry of the Sedge" (P, p. 67). The initiates of the Golden Dawn would claim with Pound in Canto XCI:

They who are skilled in fire shall read \mathbf{H} tan, the dawn.

In contrast to these initiates are those who think that the stars "are but wandering holes" (XLVII/237). That Pound's quest is equivalent to "Sailing to Byzantium" is demonstrated by several passages. Once the stars have been brought "to our shore," we may begin "To build the city of Dioce whose terraces are the colour of stars" (LXXIV/425). This image comes from Herodotus, and refers to ziggurat-like towers whose terraces are colored so as to correspond with the color of the ascending planets in the Ptolemaic system. Later, Pound refers to the pole-star: "'Constantinople' said Wyndham 'our star,' / Mr. Yeats called it Byzantium" (XCVI/661). A cognate image is "the blessed isles," which are related to the unification of subject and object indicated by the phrase "not to be split by syllogization" (CV/748). Pound even uses the constellation Berenice as a symbol of "the fixed stars" (XCIII/625) much as Yeats had used it in "Veronica's Napkin": "Berenice, late for a constellation, mythopoeia persisting" (XCVII/675); "Berenice, a late constellation" (CII/730); and "Selena Arsinoe / So late did queens rise into heaven" (CVI/755).

The Pole itself, Yeats's "Tent-pole of Eden," occurs in several ways in Pound. We have already touched on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life in our examination of the dragon or serpent imagery of Canto XC. It first appears in the Cantos coupled with spiral imagery, as the "Tree of Visages," a term Pound borrows from A. E. Waite's *The Holy Kabbalah*: 39

The water whirls up the bright pale sand in the spring's mouth

"Behold the Tree of the Visages!"
Forked branch-tips, flaming as if with lotus.
(IV/15)

The pines of Takasago and Ise also belong to this image-complex (IV/15; XXI/99), although when Pound wrote these Cantos he may not have thought of these trees as symbols of the axis between heaven and earth. However, the symbolism is certainly intended in later references to Ygdrasail: "that you lean 'gainst the tree of heaven, / and know Ygdrasail" (LXXXV/545), and "Beatific spirits welding together / as in one ash-tree in Ygdrasail" (XC/605). Perhaps the most unmistakable reference occurs in Canto CX:

Quercus on Mt Sumeru
can'st 'ou see with the eyes of turquoise?
heaven earth
in the center
is
juniper
(CX/778)

The sacred mountain is also a symbol for the polar axis, as this passage suggests. Pound's frequent references to Taishan in the *Pisan Cantos* and to "Mt Segur and the city of Dioce" (LXXX/510) are to the mountain as a symbolic center. "Mt Sumeru" is in fact the same mountain as Yeats's "Meru."

One of the central concepts of Pound's Confucianism is of course the doctrine of the mean, and this too is related to the concept of the polar axis. Pound called his translation of the Chung Yung "The Unwobbling Pivot," and parts of that work make it clear that the idea is comparable to that of the Tree of Life: "That axis is the center, is the great root of the universe; that harmony is the universe's outspread process [of existence]. From this root and in this harmony, heaven and earth are established in their precise modalities, and the multitudes of all creatures persist, nourished on their meridians."40 In other words, each creature has a center which is modeled on the center of the universe; this passage describes something very similar to "As above, so below." Another passage is reminiscent of the epistemological process as described by Richard St. Victor: "Chung Ni (Confucius) said: The master man finds the center and does not waver; the mean man runs counter to the circulation about the invariable." Pound's comment is interesting: the ideogram chung, he says, represents "most definitely a

process in motion, an axis around which something turns."⁴¹ That Pound has not forgotten St. Victor's distinctions in writing the *Cantos* is apparent in Canto LXXXVII:

"Cogitatio, meditatio, contemplatio."
Wrote Richardus, and Dante read him.
Centrum circuli.

(LXXXVII/570)

The ideogram *chung* itself occurs frequently in the *Cantos*, never more suggestively than in Canto C (C/718):

Nel mezzo the crystal

As the chronology of these citations indicates, Pound became more engrossed with esoteric symbolism as he grew older, and this brought his poetics still closer to those of Yeats. When working on the Rock Drill Cantos, for example, he asked Mrs. Yeats to send him a copy of John Heydon's alchemical tract Holy Guide, which Yeats had owned, and then drew on its symbology for Canto XCII. In Canto CXIII, Pound withdraws the criticism of Yeats that he made in the Notre Dame passage of Canto LXXXIII. But in order to understand the context of this retraction we need to see how characteristic the whole Canto is of Pound's later poetic style. The Canto opens with an image of the sun moving through the twelve signs of the zodiac:

Thru the 12 Houses of Heaven seeing the just and the unjust, tasting the sweet and the sorry, Pater Helios turning.

(CXIII/786)

The entire Canto explores the poet's restless mind ("the mind as Ixion, unstill, ever turning") within this context of Yeatsian cyclic movement. To those who follow "Pater Helios" into the light Pound says: "God's eye art'ou, do not surrender perception" (CXIII/790). But ignorance of everything from religious ritual to the American Constitution ("Article X") is threatening this perception: "'but that kind of ignorance' said the old priest to Yeats / (in a railway train) 'is spreading every day from the schools' "(CXIII/789). In this Canto Yeats's perception stands against this ignorance. Once again Yeats notices the symbol in Paris, but all that matters now is that he has been perceptive enough to notice it. The line on Yeats is framed by a reference to Plotinus ("the body is inside the soul—") and to sacred Mithraic rites ("the bull by the force that is in him—") and preceded by light imagery that helps us under-

stand the significance of the symbol Yeats saw. The poet who noted the symbol, whatever it was, has demonstrated the perceptiveness of one who was preeminently "God's eye":

That the body is inside the soul-

the lifting and folding brightness the darkness shattered, the fragment.

That Yeats noted the symbol over that portico

(Paris).

And the bull by the force that is in him—not lord of it,
mastered.
(CXIII/788–89)

Forrest Read writes that this passage "reverses the spoof of Pisan LXXXIII," but neither Read nor James Wilhelm develops the implications of this reversal for Pound's late poetry. 43 In The Later Cantos of Ezra Pound, Wilhelm writes of this passage: "The notion of man imprisoned in his self-made environment is then contrasted with Plotinus' idea that the soul envelops the body in an incandescent shroud that animates and nurtures it. Yeats has observed this phenomenon in the Cathedral of Notre Dame."44 The "phenomenon" Wilhelm refers to is apparently the priority of the spiritual over the physical. The body is significant only as the product of the soul, just as the portico is significant only because of the symbol that surmounts it. If this interpretation is correct, it indeed reverses Pound's spoof on Yeats admiring a "symbol / with Notre Dame standing inside it. . . ." Could Pound be saying that Yeats was right in valuing the symbolic power of the Cathedral over-in Ellmann's phrase-"What it is in itself"? There is a similar emphasis on the primacy of the spiritual over the material in an allusion to the Na Khi ritual in Canto CXII: "without 2Mùan 1bpo / no reality" (p. 784).

But the passage from Canto CXIII is too fragmentary to support the argument that Pound has adopted Yeats's view of the relationship of the object and its symbol. It is enough that Pound praises Yeats as a poet who renews traditional symbols, as no doubt the symbol over the portico was, and who is aware of "the lifting and folding brightness." Both poets, as Pound puts it in the lines that precede his final reference to Yeats in this Canto, have their minds "set on that light / saffron, emerald, seeping."

The reference to Ixion which concludes Canto CXIII is Pound's admission that he has not achieved the sought-for union of subject and object, the "bust thru from quotidien into 'divine or permanent

world'"; but this does not mean that he denies it can occur. "Time, space, / neither life nor death is the answer," he writes later (CXV/794). Yeats seems to comment on these gnomic lines when he writes: "Neither between death and birth nor between birth and death can the soul find more than momentary happiness; its object is to pass rapidly round its circle and find freedom from that circle. 45 Or again: "Death cannot solve the antinomy: death and life are its expression. We come at birth into a multitude and after death would perish into the One did not a witch of Endor call us back. . . . "46 We might hazard the guess that Pound changed his mind about what the critic called "Yeats's incorrigibly symbologizing mind" because he came to see that we are always conditioned by the whirling gyres. We can approach the paradisiacal state only through symbol. The test of a poet is not in his daily "dawdling" around objects, which may or may not have significance; it is in what he actually wrote. Few other poets have managed to live up to Pound's prime injunction, "Day by day make it new" (LIII/265), but Yeats certainly did. The "subject" is perpetually encountering new objects and is thus remaking itself at every instant. Many readers of Yeats have found his true epitaph in the poem "The Man and the Echo" rather than in "Under Ben Bulben." The symbolic sphere dangles its temptations before the "Man," with its promise of an intellect grown "sure / That all's arranged in one clear view," and the "Echo" adds its faint agreement. But the "Man" is not yet dead and voices his doubts before these too are rendered ineffectual by the "precise image" of minute particularity:

> O Rocky Voice, Shall we in that great night rejoice? What do we know but that we face One another in this place? (*P*, p. 346)

The tonality of this poem is very like that of Pound's last Cantos. The earlier parts of "The Man and the Echo" concern questions of responsibility: did *Cathleen ni Houlihan* inspire the leaders of the 1916 rising, and did Yeats's words to Margot Ruddock tip the balance of her fragile sanity? No answer can be given: "And all seems evil until I / Sleepless would lie down and die." In Canto CXVI, Pound similarly weighs his achievement, although Pound seems to give more weight to the possibilities of the "clear view" than Yeats gives:

I have brought the great ball of crystal; who can lift it?

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Can you enter the great acorn of light?

But the beauty is not the madness
Tho' my errors and wrecks lie about me.
And I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere.

(CXVI/795)

The complex of esoteric images represented by the gyre and sphere gave to both Pound and Yeats the means of expressing their sense of a divine pattern in the world. Until he "tried to write Paradise" (CXX/803) in the late Cantos, Pound was more inclined than Yeats to believe that the "great crystal" or the "one clear view" was attainable. Yeats understood before Pound did the burden of expressing the "half-read wisdom of daemonic images" (P, p. 204), but he understood by the time of *Thrones* and the late fragments. Pound never outgrew Yeats as a poetic master. With the originality of a great poet, Pound worked in the same esoteric tradition that Yeats developed. The originality of each poet should not obscure the deep affinities of their poetry.

² Ezra Pound, "Status Rerum," Poetry, I (Jan. 1913), 125.

³ The Cantos of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 528. All further references to The Cantos are to this edition.

⁴ Richard Ellmann, Eminent Domain (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967),

p. 86.

⁵ Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1950), p. 210.

⁶ Donald Davie, Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor (New York: Oxford Univ.

Press, 1964), p. 181.

⁷ Thomas Parkinson, "Yeats and Pound: The Illusion of Influence," Comparative Literature, 6 (Summer 1954), 264. K. L. Goodwin observes that "Yeats was unlike most of the other objects of Pound's influence in that he was an older and more successful writer than Pound himself." The Influence of Ezra Pound (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966).

⁸ Frank Touhy, *Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), p. 148. Richard F. Peterson, *William Butler Yeats* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), p. 202; Wendy Stallard Flory, *Ezra Pound and* The Cantos: *A Record of Struggle* (New Haven: Yale Univ.

Press, 1980), p. 14.

9 Forrest Read, '76: One World and the Cantos of Ezra Pound (Chapel Hill:

Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1981), p. 51.

New Directions, 1971), p. 296.

¹ The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T. S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 154.

11 Personae: The Collected Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound (New York: New

Directions, 1971), p. 3.

¹² Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespeare: Their Letters 1909–1914, eds. Omar Pound and A. Walton Litz (New York: New Directions, 1984). See especially Letter 81.

¹³ Ezra Pound, Guide to Kulchur (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 77.

¹⁴ James J. Wilhelm, *Il miglior fabbro* (Orono, Me.: National Poetry Foundation, 1982), p. 74.

15 A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision (1925), eds. George Mills Harper and

Walter Kelly Hood (New York: Macmillan, 1978), p. xi.

- ¹⁶ W. B. Yeats, A Vision. A Reissue with the Author's Final Revisions (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 25. Hereafter called VB to differentiate it from the 1925 edition.
- ¹⁷ W. B. Yeats, *The Poems: A New Edition*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York: Macmillan, 1983), p. 362. All further references to *Poems* are to this edition, cited as *P*.

¹⁸ Sophokles: Women of Trachis. A Version by Ezra Pound (London: Faber,

1969), p. 66.

¹⁹ W. B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 401.

²⁰ Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, p. 210.

²¹ James Olney, The Rhizome and the Flower: The Perennial Philosophy-Yeats and Jung (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1980), pp. 152-55.

²² Ibid., p. 153.

²³ See Timothy Materer, "Pound's Vortex," *Paideuma*, 6 (Fall 1977), 175–76; Ian F. A. Bell, "Pound's Vortex: Shapes Ancient and Modern," *Paideuma*, 10 (Fall 1981), 243–71; Bell, *Critic as Scientist: The Modernist Poetics of Ezra Pound* (London: Methuen, 1981), ch. 4.

²⁴ F. A. C. Wilson, W. B. Yeats and Tradition (London: Gollancz, 1958), p.

208.

²⁵ Richard Ellmann, *The Identity of Yeats* (London: Faber, 1964), p. 152.

²⁶ See Patrick J. Keane, "The Human Entrails and Starry Heavens: Some Instances of Visual Art as Patterns for Yeats's Mingling of Heaven and Earth," Bulletin of Research in the Humanities, 84 (Autumn 1981), 371–73.

²⁷ Graham Hough, *The Mystery Religion of W. B. Yeats* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1984), p. 50. The phrase "masterful images" is from Yeats's "The

Circus Animals' Desertion."

²⁸ Concerning Pound's interest in Yogic philosophy, see William French and Timothy Materer, "Far Flung Vortices & Ezra's 'Hindo' Yogi," *Paideuma*, 11 (Spring 1982), 39–53. Israel Regardie denies the correspondence between the Tree of Life and "the Yoga chakra system" (Regardie, *The Middle Pillar* [St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn, 1970 (1938), p. 122), but the denial carries no force to a comparative mythologist. In this, Yeats's correspondent of the early 1920s, Christina Stoddart, is closer to the truth in her book *Light-bearers of Darkness* (Hawthorne, Calif.: Christian Book Club, 1969 [1930], esp. ch. 4).

²⁹ Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound, ed. Michael John King (New York:

New Directions, 1976), pp. 36, 71.

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³⁰ Personae: The Collected Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound, pp. 169-70.

31 Read, '76: One World and the Cantos of Ezra Pound, p. 126.

32 Ezra Pound, "Cavalcanti," in Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, p. 154.

33 Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of

California Press, 1971), p. 337.

- ³⁴ Our discussion of Canto XC is indebted to ch. 6 of James Wilhelm's *The Later Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: Walker, 1977) as well as to his *Dante and Pound: The Epic of Judgment* (Orono, Me.: Univ. of Maine Press, 1974). We are also indebted throughout this paper to William French's studies of Pound's esotericism.
- ³⁵ Queen Arsinoe II died in 270 B.C. and was worshipped as Arsinoe Aphrodite. See Massimo Bacigalupo, *The Formèd Trace: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1980), p. 441.

³⁶ Ezra Pound, Confucius (New York: New Directions, 1969), p. 20.

³⁷ A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision (1925), p. 215.

38 VB, p. 240.

³⁹ Angela Elliott, "Pound's 'Isis Kuanon': An Ascension Motif in *The Cantos*," *Paideuma*, 13 (Winter 1984), 341.

40 Pound, Confucius, p. 103.

41 Ibid.

⁴² Walter Baumann, "Secretary of Nature, J. Heydon," in New Approaches to Ezra Pound, ed. Eva Hesse (London: Faber, 1969), p. 311.

43 Read, '76: One World and the Cantos of Ezra Pound, p. 424.

44 Wilhelm, The Later Cantos of Ezra Pound, p. 189.

45 VB, p. 236.

46 VB, p. 52.

The Gift and the Craft: An Approach to the Poetry of Seamus Heaney

ELMER ANDREWS

In a 1981 interview with John Haffenden, Heaney remarked: "It's possible to exacerbate. . . . I believe that what poetry does to me is comforting. . . . I think that art does appease, assuage." In Field Work the poet, newly "landed in the hedge-school of Glanmore," renews his commitment "to raise / A voice caught back off slug-horn and slow chanter / That might continue, hold, dispel, appease." "The Harvest Bow," one of the best poems in this volume, ends by quoting Coventry Patmore, "'The end of art is peace.'" Heaney expresses a view of poetry as secret and natural even though it must operate in a world that is public and brutal. He has found himself caught in the sectarian cross fire with fellow Catholics pressing him to write political verse and liberal critics congratulating him on not taking sides.

For Heaney the great question is: "How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea / Whose action is no stronger than a flower?" His answer is also from Shakespeare—lines from *Timon of Athens* which have become, he says, "a touchstone" for him: "Our poesy is as a gum which oozes /

From whence 'tis nourished."2

The concept of "nourishment" is an important one for Heaney. The first part of his *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968–1978* discusses the things which have nourished his poetry and contributed to the development of a poetic voice which, like Wordsworth's, emerged out of a music overheard in nature and in childhood.

Preoccupations begin with the word "Omphalos," navel, center point. Significantly, it is the sound of the word which first recommends

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it to his attention: he immediately relates it to the sound of water gushing from the pump in the yard of the farm where he was brought up. The source of his imaginative power, we are to understand, lies in his rural childhood experience that is centered and staked in the image of the pump. The pump, like his poetry, taps hidden springs to conduct what is sustaining and life-giving. The center of the poet's imaginative world is also the center of family and community life: the women of five households came with their big enamel buckets to draw water from that pump. Its rhythms are the elemental rhythms of nature itself, that continue undisturbed by the American bombers returning to their base nearby, indifferent to the great historical events of the 1940s. The pump is a symbol of the nourishment which comes from knowing and belonging to a certain place and a certain mode of life.

For Heaney, a sense of self depends on a sense of place and a sense of history, something which is typical of the Irish writer and derives to some extent from the Irish writer's desire to protect and preserve what is threatened and diminished. Possession of the land, like possession of different languages, is a matter of particular urgency in Ireland. While the Revival was responsible for trammeling many a poetic talent in an essentially diversionary, regional voice rather than promoting an individual and personal one, it marked the beginning of a discovery of confidence in the Irish writer's own past, his own place, his own speech, English and Irish.

More recently, there was Patrick Kavanagh, whose work helped persuade Heaney of the poetic validity of the regional and traditional. And, from the other side of the cultural and religious divide, John Hewitt, whose "lifelong concern to question and document the relationship between art and locality has provided all subsequent Northern writers with a hinterland of reference, should they require a tradition more intimate than the broad perspectives of the English literary achievement." But just as important as these Irish writers was the influence of Wordsworth, "perhaps the first man to articulate the nurture that becomes available to the feelings through dwelling in one dear perpetual place" (*P*, p. 145).

Heaney's poetic career began with modest ambitions, by delving into his own childhood past. But gradually he extends his excavation of self to place it in relation to a communal past. He likes to think of his poems as "soundings" that probe the landscape for a shared and diminished culture. He attempts to define and interpret the present by bringing it into significant relationship with the past. Dominated by a sense of nature's powers, he sees history, language, and myth as bound

up with nature, with territory and landscape. The landscape is sacramental. It is instinct with signs. Heaney responds to it with a deep sense of the numinous. He is open to intuitions that relate human female psychology and sexuality to the landscape. Landscape becomes a memory, a continuity, a piety, a feared and fecund mother, an insatiable lover.

This sacral vision of place has its origins in his childhood apprehension of nature on and around the family farm, which he recalls in the first part of Preoccupations. Lost among the pea-drills, he finds himself in a "sunlit lair . . . a green web, a caul of veined light, a tangle of rods and pods, stalks and tendrils, full of assuaging earth and leaf-smell" (P, p. 17). The experience of another "secret nest" in the hollow bole of a birch tree introduces the image of the wood-lover and tree-hugger which underlies the Heaney/Sweeney identification of recent work: "Above your head, the living tree flourished and breathed, you shouldered the slightly vibrant bole, and if you put your forehead to the rough pith you felt the whole lithe and whispering crown of willows moving in the sky above you" (P, p. 18). He remembers bathing naked in a moss-hole: "treading the thick-river mud, unsettling a smoky muck off the bottom and coming out smeared and weedy and darkened" (P, p. 19). This incident is recalled as a "betrothal" and an "initiation," the ritual intensity of Heaney's language indicating an involvement with nature through which his religious and sexual impulses also find expression.

Beyond the security of the farmyard lay "forbidden ground," the "realm of bogeys" (P, p. 19), the haunt of recluses and mystery men who lived on the fringes of the bog. As childhood perspectives widen, the physical landscape assumes a social and historical dimension as well. He becomes aware that he lived in the realm of division as well as the country of community. Mossbawn, the name of the family farm, lay between Castledawson and Toome, between English influence (Castledawson) and native experience (Toome), the demesne and the bog. The demesne was Moyola Park, an estate occupied by Lord Moyola, formerly Major James Chichester-Clark, the ex-Unionist prime minister of Northern Ireland. The bog was where hoards of flints and other relics had been found, reminders that this was one of the oldest inhabited places in the country. Mossbawn itself is a name made up of two words: "Moss," a Scots word brought to Ireland by the Planters; and "bawn," the name the English colonists gave to their fortified farmhouses. Mossbawn-the Planter's house on the bog. Heaney comments, however, that the preferred pronunciation was Moss bann, that

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"bán" is the Gaelic word for white, and that the name may therefore mean the moss of bog cotton: "In the syllables of my home I see a metaphor of the split culture of Ulster" (P, p. 35). Mossbawn is bordered by the townlands of Broagh and Anahorish, "forgotten Gaelic music that leads back to the ancient civilization that was destroyed by soldiers and administrators like Spenser and Davies" (P, p. 36). At the same time, Heaney acknowledges that his own perceptions have been conditioned significantly by the English tradition. The countryside of Grove Hill and Back Park, which also bordered the family farm, is recognized as "a version of pastoral," and while "Grove and Park . . . do not reach me as a fibre from a tap-root," they are part of "the intricate and various foliage of history and culture that I grew up beneath" (P, p. 36).

From an early age there was in Heaney's life another love as well as nature: "I was in love with words themselves" (P, p. 45). Words as verbal music is another source of assuagement, and it is the poet's delight in words which more than anything else nourishes his poetry. "The secret of being a poet, Irish or otherwise," Heaney says, "lies in the summoning of the energies of words" (P, p. 36).

In Preoccupations he traces his love of words back to childhood as he does his love of nature. He recalls his first experience of how words as bearers of history and mystery began to invite him: listening to his mother recite lists of affixes and suffixes, Latin roots with English meanings, rhymes that had been part of her schooling. Then there was the "exotic listing" (P, p. 45) of Stuttgart, Leipzig, Oslo, Hilversum, on the wireless dial; the "beautiful sprung rhythms" (P, p. 45) of the old BBC weather forecast: Dogger, Rockall, Malin, Shetland, Faroes, Finisterre; "the gorgeous and inane phraseology" (P, p. 45) of the Catechism; the litany of the Blessed Virgin. At school there was his introduction to the classic canon of English poetry, the "roadside rhymes" (P, p. 26) chants that were scurrilous and sectarian, and the reading of Irish myths and legends. Later came the conscious savoring of the music of an English education: Keats, Webster, Anglo-Saxon verse, Wordsworth, and Hopkins, who receives a special mention because of the similarity between his energetic, hard-edged, consonantal music and Heaney's own Ulster dialect.

All this he mentions as contributing to the process of finding a poetic voice. That voice, he explains, is composed of two elements. There is that part of the poetry which takes its structure and beat, its play of meter and rhythms, its diction and allusiveness, from the literary tradition. And there are also those "intonations and appeare-

ments" (P, p. 62) offered by a poet's music which are instinctual, unconscious, and preverbal, made up of the kinds of noise which assuage him, pleasure or repel him, drawn from the world around him. They are the inklings and echoes which reach him from "all the realms of whisper."4 Heaney speaks of the private and cultural "depthcharges" (P, p. 150) latent in certain words and sounds and rhythms and kinds of rhyme. There is a "binding secret" between words, "which delights not just the ear but the whole backward abysm of mind and body" (P, p. 150). One is reminded of Eliot's "auditory imagination": "The feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back."5 The personal and Irish pieties Heaney thinks of as vowels, and the literary awareness nourished on English as consonants. His poems, he hopes, will be "vocables" (P, p. 37), adequate to his whole experience.

One way in which Heaney describes the process of turning feeling into words is as an "oozing" that starts with the "gazing heart," the "listening ear," a "wise passivity." Poems come up out of the dark, organically oozing up into consciousness:

I have always listened for poems, they come sometimes like bodies come out of a bog, almost complete, seeming to have been laid down a long time ago, surfacing with a touch of mystery. They certainly involve craft and determination, but chance and instinct have a role in the thing too. (*P*, p. 34).

The voice in Heaney's poetry is the voice that is found to express what Eliot termed "a dark embryo." It originates in a primary generating surrender to the poet's données. Discussing the difference between "technique" and "craft," Heaney says:

The crucial action is pre-verbal, to be able to allow the first alertness or come-hither, sensed in a blurred or incomplete way, to dilate and approach as a thought or a theme or a phrase.... That first emergence involves the divining, vatic, oracular function. (P, p. 49).

This is technique. Technique is what allows the first stirring of the mind around a word, a rhythm, an image, or a memory to grow toward articulation, articulation not necessarily in terms of argument or explication, but in terms of "its own potential for harmonious self-reproduction" (*P*, p. 48).

The second activity is "the making function" that depends on "craft"—the "thought" finding the words. Sometimes, Heaney admits,

it is not easy to distinguish between feeling getting into words, and words turning into feeling. His title, *Door into the Dark*, he says, was a gesture toward the idea of words themselves being doors.

Wordsworth is Heaney's primary model of the poet as diviner. Wordsworth is attentive to the invitations of "the mind's internal echo," and sets out to discover the verbal means which will amplify his original visionary excitement into "a redundant energy / Vexing its own creation." Heaney begins a discussion of his own poetry in "Feeling into Words" by quoting from *The Prelude*:

The hiding places of my power
Seem open; I approach, and then they close;
I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
May scarcely see at all, and I would give,
While yet we may, as far as words can give,
A substance and a life to what I feel:
I would enshrine the spirit of the past
For future generations.

Heaney embraces these lines as a statement of his own view of what poetry means to him:

Implicit in those lines is a view of poetry which I think is implicit in the few poems I have written that give me any right to speak: poetry as divination, poetry as revelation of the self to the self, as restoration of the culture to itself; poems as elements of continuity, with the aura and authenticity of archaeological finds, where the buried shard has an importance that is not diminished by the importance of the buried city; poetry as a dig, a dig for finds that end up being plants. (P, p. 41).

The Wordsworthian method of composition is contrasted with the Yeatsian view of poetry: "When he talked about poetry, Yeats never talked about the 'ooze' or 'nurture'. He always talked about the 'labour' and the 'making' and the 'fascination of what's difficult.' "6

Heaney develops this contrast between "receiving" and "making" into a view of poetic creation as either a "feminine" or a "masculine" activity:

From Shakespeare's ooze to Eliot's dark embryo, we have a vision of poetic creation as a feminine action, almost parthenogenetic, where it is the ovum and its potential rather than the sperm and its penetration that underlies their accounts of poetic origins. And out of this vision of feminine action comes a language for poetry that tends to brood and breed, crop and cluster, with a texture of echo and implication, trawling the pool of the ear with a net of associations. (*P*, p. 83).

Poetry to Keats, says Heaney, has a physical equivalent in a mother's

birth pangs. But Hopkins brings to his craft a "siring instinct": "Keats has the life of a swarm, fluent and merged; Hopkins has the design of a honeycomb, definite and loaded. In Keats the rhythm is narcotic, in Hopkins it is a stimulant to the mind. Keats woos us to receive, Hopkins alerts us to perceive" (P, p. 85). Hopkins strikes his fire from flint and, unlike the organic "oozy marshlight" of symbolism, Hopkins' poetry is fretted rather than fecund, maintaining a design rather than releasing a flow, exuding a masculine brilliance and revealing the presence of "powerful and active thought" (P, p. 86) that disciplines the music and takes charge of the language and emotion. It is possible for the two opposing spirits of poetry to be reconciled: Yeats is said to prove "that deliberation can be so intensified that it becomes synonymous with inspiration" (P, p. 110).

Everywhere in his writings Heaney is acutely sensitive to the opposition between masculine will and intelligence on the one hand, and, on the other, feminine instinct and emotion; between architectonic masculinity and natural female feeling for mystery and divination. It is the opposition between the arena of public affairs and the intimate, secret stations of "the realms of whisper." He uses it to describe the tension between English influence and Irish experience ("The feminine element for me involves the matter of Ireland and the masculine strain is drawn from involvement with English literature" [P, p. 132]). It underlies two different responses to landscape, one that is "lived, illiterate and unconscious," and one that is "learned, literate and conscious" (P, p. 131). Early poems like "Digging" and "Follower" establish his troubling self-consciousness about the relationship between "roots and reading," the lived and the learned.

In attempting to resolve these contrarieties, the example of Patrick Kavanagh was invaluable. Kavanagh, the son of a country shoemaker in Inishkeen, County Monaghan, made the move from his native parish to London in 1937, and then in 1939 to Dublin, where he spent most of the rest of his life. Kavanagh's career seemed to Heaney to parallel much in his own, especially the conflict between "the illiterate self that was tied to the little hills and earthed in the stony grey soil and the literate self that pined for 'the City of Kings / Where art, music and letters were the real things' "(P, p. 137). The importance to Heaney of Kavanagh's "The Great Hunger" lay in the balance achieved between "intimacy with actual clay" (P, p. 122) and "the penalty of consciousness" (P, p. 118), through which Kavanagh proved the poet's imaginative self-sufficiency within his own parish. Kavanagh's assertion that "parochialism is universal, it deals with fundamentals" gave Heaney

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confidence in the poetic validity of his own preoccupation with his County Derry childhood. From Kavanagh's most successful work he could learn from a poet who had managed to develop ironic points of vantage on his material, which promoted the articulation of more subtle, complex feelings about the relationship between poet and place.

The pervasiveness of the masculine/feminine opposition in Heaney's writings about himself and other poets originates in a deep-seated sense of his own divided feelings and experience. His poetry reflects the attempt to reconcile the tension. The poem, Heaney says, should be a "completely successful love act between the craft and the gift." But it is the gift, the initial incubatory action, he keeps reminding us, which is for him the crucial stage in the creative process. A poem, he believes, can survive stylistic blemishes that are due to inadequate crafting, but "it cannot survive a still-birth" (P, p. 49). Poetry is essentially a mystery, a corpse from the bog, a whispering from the dark, a gift from the goddess. The poet is passive receiver before he is an active maker.

There are times, however, when Heaney felt guilty or exasperated with this essentially passive role and wanted poetry to do something; when he wished to be a man of action making direct political statements rather than an equivocator, a parablist, a supplicant, or a withdrawn aesthete. From the beginning, from that opening image in the first poem in his first volume, "Digging," the shadow of a gunman is present, as if to convince us that the pen can be as mighty as the gun. He compensates for his failure to follow men of action by making promises: he'll dig with his pen he says. The theme does not become prominent until *North*, where art and the role of the artist come under his tormented scrutiny. By then Ulster was in a state of war.

Despite the lapse of confidence in art which North evinces—and the intensity of the anguish it occasioned should not be underestimated, as the last poem in North, "Exposure," would testify—the great bulk of Heaney's prose statements, comments to interviewers, and reviews of other writers are made from the point of view of a poet. When he turns to fellow poets, he tends to focus on their use of language, their verbal music, before theme or meaning. He never comments from the point of view of a politically committed spokesman, rarely even from a strictly academic viewpoint. He registers his appreciation of poetry as "self-delighting buds on the old bough of tradition" (P, p. 174). He takes the politically committed artist to task, in this case the Marxist, for attempting "to sweep the poetic enterprise clean of those somewhat hedonistic impulses towards the satisfactions of aural and formal play

out of which poems arise, whether they aspire to delineate or to obfuscate 'things as they are' " (P, p. 174). Typically, Paul Muldoon qualifies as "one of the very best" for "the opulence of the music, the overspill of creative joy," for his exploitation of "the language's potential for generating new meanings out of itself . . . this sense of buoyancy, this delight in the trickery and lechery that words are capable of" (P, p. 213).

"During the last few years," Heaney stated in 1975, "there has been considerable expectation that poets from Northern Ireland should 'say' something about 'the situation.' "Heaney's comment on this demand was that "in the end they [poets] will only be worth listening to if they are saying something about and to themselves." Poetry for Heaney is its own special action, has its own mode of reality. In his review of the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, who had found it impossible to make an accommodation with Soviet realities under Stalin, Heaney writes:

We live here in critical times ourselves, when the idea of poetry as an art is in danger of being overshadowed by a quest for poetry as a diagram of political attitudes. Some commentators have all the fussy literalism of an official from the ministry of truth. (P, p. 219).

What Heaney's review asserts is the urgent need to fight for the very life of poetry in a world which seems increasingly to discount it. He elevates the artist's work above the moralist's. The principle of the autonomy of art frees the artist from tendentiousness, vulgar moralizing, and political propagandizing. A cut below the surface, however, are the whole world's concerns which, by virtue of the poet's "aesthetic distance," can be treated with a kind of passionate detachment, a concerned disinterestedness. Heaney speaks as an apologist of the "religion of art." The Mandelstam review begins with this impassioned pronouncement:

"Art for Art's Sake" has become a gibe because of an inadequate notion of what art can encompass, and is usually bandied by people who are philistines anyhow. Art has a religious, a binding force, for the artist. Language is the poet's faith and the faith of his fathers and in order to go his own way and do his proper work in an agnostic time, he has to bring that faith to the point of arrogance and triumphalism. (*P*, p. 217).

Inevitably, however, politics come into communication with the poetical function, but legitimately only when the political situation has first been emotionally experienced and reduced to subordinate status in an aesthetically created universe of symbols. If Heaney's poetry automatically encompasses politics, he is careful that it should not serve

them. In this respect the Yeatsian aesthetic is exemplary. There is a passage from Yeats's essay, "Samhain: 1905," part of which Heaney quotes at the beginning of *Preoccupations*:

One cannot be less than certain that the poet, though it may well be for him to have right opinions, above all if his country be at death's door, must keep all opinion that he holds to merely because he thinks it right, out of poetry, if it is to be poetry at all. At the enquiry which preceded the granting of a patent to the Abbey Theatre I was asked if Cathleen ni Houlihan was not written to affect opinion. Certainly it was not. I had a dream one night which gave me a story, and I had certain emotions about this country, and I gave those emotions expression for my own pleasure. If I had written to convince others I would have asked myself, not "Is that exactly what I think and feel?" but "How would that strike so-and-so? How will they think and feel when they have read it?" And all would be oratorical and insincere. If we understand our own minds, and the things that are striving to utter themselves through our minds, we move others, not because we have understood or thought about those others, but because all life has the same root. Coventry Patmore has said, "The end of art is peace," and the following of art is little different from the following of religion in the intense preoccupation it demands.10

Like Yeats, Heaney writes political poetry; but, also like Yeats, he is not political in any doctrinaire sense. As a man like any other man, politics are part of his life: being a poet does not separate him from the concerns of common humanity. What being a poet means is that his concern cannot simply be with abstract ideas, but with ideas suffused and shaped by emotion, and absorbed at the deepest levels of consciousness. The Yeatsian declaration that poetry is "expression for my own pleasure" is echoed by Joyce's shade in "Station Island," when he advises the poet, "The main thing is to write / for the joy of it." Art and politics may come from different imaginative "levels" of the personality if the art is good, original, deep, authentic enough: if the latter is the case (that is, in the case of good writers) the artistic insight is prophetic, "true," at a deeper level, and for a longer time, than any political idea can be.

In an interview with Seamus Deane, Heaney sought to explain the political nature of his poetry:

Poetry is born out of the watermarks and colourings of the self. But that self in some ways takes its spiritual pulse from the inward spiritual structuring of the community to which it belongs; and the community to which I belong is Catholic and

Nationalist. I believe that the poet's force now, and hopefully in the future, is to maintain the efficacy of his own "mythos," his own cultural and political colourings, rather than to serve any particular momentary strategy that his political leaders, his para-military organization or his own liberal self might want him to serve. I think that poetry and politics are, in different ways, an articulation, an ordering, a giving form to inchoate pieties, prejudices, world-views, or whatever. And I think that my own poetry is a kind of slow, obstinate, papish burn, emanating from the ground I was brought up on.¹¹

Heaney will not renounce tribal prejudice as the rational humanist would urge, but write out of it in such a way as to clarify his own feelings, not to encourage—or discourage—prejudice in others. That would be propaganda—the didactic achieved at the expense of the poetic. "We make out of the quarrel with others rhetoric," Yeats has said, "but out of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." Clearly, Yeats, like Heaney, was preoccupied with the opposition between the divided selves of the poet, between the poet as poet and the poet as a human being like other human beings. "In most poets," writes C. Day Lewis, "there is an intermittent conflict between the poetic self and the rest of the man; and it is by reconciling the two, not by eliminating the one, that they can reach their full stature." Heaney strives for such a reconciliation—a reconciliation between primitive piety and rational humanism, between illiterate fidelity to origins and a sense of objective reality, between the feminine and the masculine impulses.

For Heaney, the ultimate example of this kind of synthesis is Dante. Discussing how the modern poet has used Dante, Heaney shows how Eliot discovered the political Dante, the poet with a "universal language," the artist as seer and repository of tradition, one who was prepared to submit his intelligence and sensibility to the disciplines of "philosophia" and religious orthodoxy: "Eliot's ultimate attraction is to the way Dante could turn values and judgements into poetry, the way the figure of the poet as thinker and teacher merged into the figure of the poet as expresser of a universal myth that could unify the abundance of the inner world and the confusion of the outer."13 All poets turn to great masters of the past to recreate them in their own image. This was the "stern and didactic" 14 image of Dante that Eliot discovered in the struggle to embrace a religious faith. Mandelstam, on the other hand, in the effort to free himself from the pressures of Stalinist orthodoxy, discovers a different Dante: "Dante is not perceived as the mouthpiece of an orthodoxy but rather as the apotheosis of free,

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natural, biological process, as a hive of bees, a process of crystallization, a hurry of pigeon flights, a focus for all the impulsive, instinctive, nonutilitarian elements in the creative life."15

For his own part, Heaney responds to the Dante who "could place himself in a historical world yet submit that world to scrutiny from a perspective beyond history," who "could accommodate the political and the transcendent." Dante, says Heaney, is the great model for the poet who "would explore the typical strains which the consciousness labours under in this country. The main tension is between two often contradictory commands: to be faithful to the collective historical experience and to be true to the recognitions of the emerging self."16 Heaney's goal is the achievement of that momentary peace in which all oppositions are reconciled in the self-contained, transcendent poetic symbol.

¹ John Haffenden, Viewpoints: Poets in Conversation (London: Faber, 1981), p. 68.

² Seamus Heaney, Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978 (London: Faber, 1980), p. 33. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text as P.

³ Quoted by Michael Longley in "Poetry" in Causeway: The Arts in Ulster, ed. Michael Longley (Belfast: Arts Council of Northern Ireland, 1971), pp. 106-07.

⁴ The phrase is from Heaney's poem, "Shelf Life," in Station Island (London: Faber, 1984), p. 24.

⁵ T. S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (London: Faber, 1933),

p. 119.

⁶ Heaney, in interview with Patrick Garland, "Poets on Poetry," in The Listener, 8 November 1973, p. 629.

Patrick Kavanagh, "The Parish and the Universe," in Collected Pruse (Lon-

don: Martin, Brien & O'Keefe, 1973), p. 283.

8 Interview with Garland.

 Seamus Heaney, Poetry Book Society Bulletin, 85 (Summer 1975), 1.
 W. B. Yeats, "Samhain: 1905," in Explorations (London: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 198-99. See also Preoccupations, p. 7.

11 Heaney, in interview with Seamus Deane, "Unhappy and at Home," in

The Crane Bag, No. 1 (1977), 67.

12 C. Day Lewis, "Poetry and Politics," in Twentieth Century Poetry: Critical Essays and Documents, ed. Graham Martin and P. N. Furbank (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1975), p. 178.

13 Seamus Heaney, "Envies and Identifications: Dante and the Modern

Poet," in Irish University Review (Spring 1985), 14.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., p. 18.

16 Ibid., pp. 18-19.

The Ophiolatry of Ted Hughes

LEONARD M. SCIGAJ

Those who enjoy the poetry of Ted Hughes may yet remain surprised at the recent vein of landscape poetry continued in his new volume River (1983). After the early craftsmanlike formalism, one gradually grew accustomed to Wodwo (1967), Crow (1970–71), and Gaudete (1977)—to a decade of joltingly dislocating, heavily kinetic and assertive poetry that confronted experience through surrealistic nightmare, satiric indictments of modern Western civilization, and oblique uses of primitive mythology. But how, from these analytic and mythic distances, does Hughes achieve the quiet confidence of the opening farmer's journal in Moortown (1979), the ethereal landscapes and cloudscapes of Remains of Elmet (1979), and the inner calm and serene visionary depth of River?

In the coilings and uncoilings of a career that now spans a quarter century, Hughes's poetry has sloughed its skin at least three times. One can chart the undulating changes in his art with great accuracy through elucidating his use of the serpent symbol. Throughout his poetry Hughes has chosen the serpent, perennially a symbol of nature's powers of rebirth and renewal in both Occidental and Oriental literature,1 to signify the possibilities for transformation, self-development, and spiritual enlargement in the inner world, and also for success in goalseeking temporal experience in the outer world. Hughes, who graduated with a degree in social anthropology from Cambridge in 1954, comprehends that Oriental cultures in world literature have graphed in great detail the inner world powers that lead to self-discipline, serenity, absorption in the simple cycles of nature, and an awareness of the subjective self as the world ground and prime organizer of experience; whereas Western cultures have predominantly charted psychological stages in the quest for personality growth, compassion for one's fellow

man, and successful goal-seeking activity in time and historical experience. Especially in his two "Myth and Education" essays and the first Faas interview, Hughes emphasized the need to develop both the inner and the outer worlds, and to integrate them to achieve wholeness.² The serpent poems become a reliable touchstone for recognizing shifts in emphasis in this inner/outer distinction across two and a half decades of Hughes's career.

In a little-known 1963 book review, Hughes actually offered a prophetic announcement of the coilings his prodigious corpus would take—an insight that, with some interpolation, accounts for the inscribed snakeskins of his formalism of the Fifties, the surrealism of the Sixties, and the equipoised landscapes of his recent work. "Our common dream, as archetypal as any," wrote Hughes, is that of a "two-way journey toward Reality-toward the objectless radiance of the Self, where the world is a composition of benign Holy Powers, and toward the objective reality of the world, where man is a virtuoso bacteria."3 We can achieve an assured sense of selfhood, Hughes reasoned, either through the "objectless" asceticism of Oriental thought (the Atman of the Upanishads or the samadhi of Yoga, for instance), where nature is perceived as a "benign" extension of the self's interior serenity, or through the Western quest for an ideal, involving psychological rounds of nature's cycle of struggle, death, and rebirth-the world of the "virtuoso bacteria." Both journeys reveal a spiritual element in nature, confirmed by centuries of primitive and modern literature, that promotes a growth toward enlightenment, and an enlargement of consciousness.

Hughes celebrates Western modes of coping with the outer world in the formalism of the Fifties. The surrealism of the Sixties, however, presents debased serpents that signify the effects of what Hughes believes to be the constrictions of contemporary Western culture: its propagation of myths that deify scientific fact and perpetuate the sexual repression of Protestantism. Snakes in the poetry of the Sixties are bruised and beaten; they survive only by retreating to their underground home in the psyche, to an inner oasis of Oriental self-discipline, to allow the psyche respite from the scorching sun of Western aggression. But the poetry of the Seventies reveals that Hughes gradually realized that his insistent analyses of the defects of modern Western culture, however incisive, revealed his complicity in the overuse of the very powers of analytic reason and masculine will that he criticized. Through neglect he transgressed against the feminine. In the poetry of the late Seventies and early Eighties Hughes revives his

reverence for the feminine principle in nature and for the anima in the male psyche. This leads him back to the outer world, to embrace the powers of nature joyously and reverently, as healing and as revelatory of the great mysteries of life. Here the snake images convey either a cabalistic or Taoist mystic calm in penetrating to the source beyond the temporal flux of opposites, or a Western acquiescence to his role as dying and reviving consort of the White Goddess. The sloughed skins of Hughes's serpent poems mark progressions in his dialogue with man's inner and outer worlds, with each new stage revealing significant growth.

In Lupercal (1960), his second volume, poems in which serpent imagery appears typically convey a positive attitude toward temporal experience in Western culture. Though the "coils of the sleeping anaconda" attend a nightmare vision of destruction and anticipate the surrealism of the Sixties in "Mayday on Holderness," nature in "Relic" transcends her cyclic processes of birth and death: "Time in the sea eats its tail, thrives." Here the tail-eating Uroboros serpent of alchemy affirms the possibility of spiritual rebirth in nature. Regenerative water, the serpent's primary element in comparative mythology, forms a crucial portion of the life-sustaining cosmology that Hughes prepares for his infant daughter Frieda in the uncollected "To F. R. at Six Months":

How much is ours when it comes to being born and begetting? Your Adam was the sun, your Eve the rock, And the serpent water.

Hughes locates a purposeful dialectic in the Western historical process in *Lupercal*. In "Cleopatra to the Asp" (*L*, p. 60) the rigid and virginal Augustus will be swallowed by the Asp—by nature's cyclic reaffirmation of order in time. A diabolic Cleopatra, deprived by Augustus of sexual fulfillment, merges with Nile fertility, and prays to the Asp to remove this interloper. Though Antony in Rome failed to remove Augustus, the serpent's long coils of historical renewal will accomplish the task:

May the moon Ruin him with virginity! Drink me now, whole With coiled Egypt's past; then from my delta Swim like a fish toward Rome.

The 1961 poem "Theology" relates the possibility of a final transcendence to be accomplished by working through the alimentary coils of history, the serpent's "dark intestine" in the poem. Hughes revises

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biblical myth to portray Adam as first to eat the apple of experience, followed by Eve, the maternal principle of growth in nature. The serpent eats Eve, and then slopes off to a private paradise, oblivious and possibly superior to the queries of a peevish God:

The serpent, meanwhile, Sleeps his meal off in Paradise— Smiling to hear God's querulous calling.

The early serpent poems affirm a faith in man's involvement with nature in time and historical experience, and in his ability to wrest growth from her cyclic changes. But Hughes's faith in Western man's outward journey into objective experience reverted to despair as the Sixties wore on. By the time of the publication of *Wodwo* in 1967, Hughes's emphasis upon the carnage created by Western culture's myths of scientific objectivity and sexual repression so colored the themes and imagery of the volume that the reprinting of "Theology" to open Part III of *Wodwo* shifted the poem's emphasis away from the "dark intestine" to the serpent's private paradise—as if Hughes were saying "good-bye to all that" and reverting to a transhistorical paradise like that of the Chinese Buddhist Paradise of Amitabha in the "White Lotus Ode" of the Pure Land School.9

Between the publication of Lupercal and Wodwo Hughes may have been snake-bitten-by a book about serpents. Sylvia Plath wrote to her mother in early 1962 that Hughes had received a book on "the six great snakes of the world," to review for the New Statesman. 10 Though the review, if written, was never published, and the book never identified, Clifford Pope's The Giant Snakes, published November 13, 1961, is the only likely candidate. Pope concentrates upon "The Big Six": "the anaconda, the boa constrictor, and the Indian, reticulate, amethystine, and African rock pythons."11 A chapter on serpent worship rehearses the dual symbolism of snakes as inflicting deadly bites, and as suggesting rebirth through the periodic shedding of the entire body covering, and through their undulating, wavelike movements, suggesting water. Pope also indicates how pervasive a symbol of rebirth was the snake in primitive cultures, both Oriental and Occidental. He discusses the Rainbow Serpent of Australia, the chief source of magical power to medicine men, the Indian cobra as the totem of the "Solar Race," the close association of the Minoan Earth Mother with snakes, the association of snakes with healing in the Greek temple of Asclepius, and the pervasive snake worship of Africa.

At one point in his text, however, Pope comments that "the ab-

sence of concern for animals in the teachings of Christ is puzzling to say the least, and accounts for the feeling among Christian peoples that animal worship is an oddity."12 Though Hughes may have absorbed Robert Graves's bias against the Protestant Reformation from an early fascination with *The White Goddess*, ¹³ perhaps Pope's reminder crystallized thoughts that had been forming for years. Better still, reading Pope's book may have prompted the creative insight of using the serpent symbol to express his growing dissatisfaction with Western culture; for every serpent poem written from this point on during the Sixties presents the snake as a degraded, abused, and out-of-place creature in modern Western culture. In the past, studies by historians such as Lynn White, Jr., and Nicholas Berdyaev paralleled Hughes's analysis of modern Western culture as they affirm that Christianity succeeded in annihilating primitive man's animistic sense of close contact and community with nature—with her landscapes, plants, and animals. This paved the way for the abstractions and utilitarianism of modern science, and for Protestantism's ethic of industry and material success as proof of being regenerate.14

The serpent poems of Recklings, Wodwo, and Crow 15 place the snake as a minor or abused figure, in impoverished and often very violent landscapes controlled by the myths of Protestant Christianity and modern science. The Welsh adder of "Dully Gumption's Addendum" (Rec, p. 10-11), infected with Protestant polemicisms against the Divine Kings, enters his mother and ultimately produces Cromwellian maggots that create a dreary English educational system—the "greying disciplinarian masks / Of Addison of Gladstone and of Arnold"—and a postwar deadness that molders like bad cheese. "Fallen Eve" (Rec, p. 17) presents a further account of the stasis of mythic development caused by the inability of Christian mythology to provide for man's instinctual life, and for his time-honored, necessary relationship to nature. The Uroboros serpent "that should have strangled" Eve "And then eaten itself" lives in a degraded state, "brutishly-veined, / Rooted in crevaces, living on flies and men." The outlawing of the instincts and the relegation of nature to the realm of the devil in the Christian doctrine of the Fall neutralizes civilization's most powerful symbol of rebirth in nature, just as Moses and Aaron dominate primitive serpent worship in the Old Testament (Exod., 7. 8-15; Num., 21. 7-9). In this environment Eve's power to "renew fallen men" is "weak": it leads only to weeping, and to endlessly painful cycles of birth and death, without renewal or enlargement of selfhood.

In other serpent poems written during the later Sixties Hughes

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combines the historical and mythic landscapes that he developed in the snake poems of Recklings, to reveal a modern Western culture that annihilates the cyclic order of nature and its potential for psychological enlargement, creating instead disorder and rage. The twin villains here are the "mishmash of scripture and physics" that Hughes presented so graphically in "Crow's Account of the Battle"—the outlawing of the instincts in the Protestant ethic, and the abstractions and utilitarianism of modern science. The serpent of "Reveille" (W, p. 34) is a functionary of Western mythology; his task is to awaken Adam and Eve from a paradisal dream-consciousness. Though in Eden man and woman were "the everlasting / Holy One of the other," this snake crushes "all Eden's orchards" with thick coils leading to a future of ashes. These ashes, in conjunction with the military imagery of the poem's title, indicate that the serpent bugles a martial song toward world wars and the nuclear age. Mythology, man's primary vehicle for organizing his spiritual and emotional life, has suffered from a case of arrested development since the time of Christianity, avers Hughes; in the Crow poem "Snake Hymn" (C, p. 75), the "love that cannot die" hangs exhausted as "an empty husk" since the time of the cross:

The blood in Eve's body That slid from her womb Knotted on the cross It had no name.

Nothing else has happened. The love that cannot die Sheds the million faces And skin of agony.

To hang, an empty husk. Still no suffering Darkens the garden Or the snake's song.

The serpent wound around the cross alludes to Orc in his serpent form, coiled around Urizen's tree of the Roman Catholic Church in Night VIIa of Blake's Four Zoas (Urizen is engraved as Pope on Plate 13 of Europe). The crucified snake also alludes to the alchemical Mercurius (perhaps Blake's source), a type of Christ, the spirit imprisoned in matter. For Jung alchemy is primarily an unconscious projection of medieval Christian beliefs, and the purpose of both is to liberate the spirit imprisoned in matter. Western civilization since the Reformation and the New Science, however, has suppressed any knowledge of

nature's transformational logic. Hughes in "Snake Hymn" may also have been meditating upon a passage from Jung's autobiography, which he read prior to 1964:

One half of humanity battens and grows strong on a doctrine fabricated by human ratiocination; the other half sickens from the lack of a myth commensurate with the situation. The Christian nations have come to a sorry pass; their Christianity slumbers and has neglected to develop its myth further in the course of centuries. 18

In this passage Jung writes that the fault lies not in the Scriptures, but "in us," for we have failed to heed Christ's admonition (Matt., 10. 16) to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." According to Jung, we can learn from the serpent's cunning by recognizing our alienated instinctual life and conforming to nature's cyclic laws of self-development.

The violent consequences of failing to recognize our kinship with nature are reserved for three poems of the late Sixties, published in the early Seventies, that present satiric treatments of the Fall, equating the post-Edenic state with the modern world of repression and mass violence, where a villainous Logos-God concerns himself only with abstractions and a utilitarian will to dominate nature. In "Genesis of Evil"19 Hughes conflates the post-Edenic state with the schizoid alternations between work and escapist entertainment that we typically find in contemporary Western culture. When "Heaven closed for the day," Eve entertains Adam with "the next installment" of a "love-thriller" that the snake, "her familiar," whispered to her during sleep. God becomes jealous, and his jealousy derives from Hughes's conception of heaven in the poem—a business corporation that recognizes only the rational. If heaven closes for the day without considering the world of darkness, the instinctual world of the snake (the "dark intestine" of "Theology"), then God, the owner of the Logos-factory, can find only token satisfaction for his repressed instinctual life by projecting a jealousy onto others. His workers, left unsatisfied after Logos work, crave escapism. The genesis of evil is the exodus of converse with the natural processes that unify the psyche. As with Cain and Abel, jealousy will inevitably lead to violence. In such a neurotic world, the snake's vitality can only continue in the form of a debased Eros that conducts guerrilla operations in periodic installments in dreamtime, and against the projections of the timid Logos-God (the mouse form in which God appears at the end of the poem is a traditional folklore symbol for timidity20).

The final two serpent poems written in the Sixties, from Crow, also present the modern Logos-God as one who promotes only analytic

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abstractions and a utilitarian dominance of nature that leads to rage and violence. In "A Horrible Religious Error" (C, p. 34), the serpent emerges as a fiery agent of transformation, visibly melting Adam and Eve to his worship. His comprehension of natural processes yields a coherent word, "A syllable like the rustling of the spheres." But Crow, who has been conditioned from birth by his tutor, the Logosschoolteacher God (see "Crow's First Lesson"), merely peers at the serpent, to analyze it and subvert it to his will through the use of force:

But Crow only peered.

Then took a step or two forward, Grabbed this creature by the slackskin nape,

Beat the hell out of it, and ate it.21

"Apple Tragedy" (C, p. 66), the most violent of the serpent poems, portrays the Logos-God as perverting the serpent's logic of self-development with draughts of ego-consciousness. Self-development through experience in nature, the gist of eating the Western mythic apple from the tree of knowledge, becomes impossible, for the egoist distances himself from natural events, in the process learning the logic of self-serving utilitarian analysis. As a result, nature's order degenerates into rage and violence:

So on the seventh day The serpent rested, God came up to him. "I've invented a new game," he said.

The serpent stared in surprise At this interloper. But God said: "You see this apple? I squeeze it and look—cider."

The serpent had a good drink And curled up into a questionmark. Adam drank and said: "Be my god." Eve drank and opened her legs

And called to the cockeyed serpent And gave him a wild time. God ran and told Adam Who in drunken rage tried to hang himself in the orchard.

The serpent tried to explain, crying "Stop" But drink was splitting his syllable.

And Eve started screeching: "Rape! Rape!" And stamping on his head.

Now whenever the snake appears she screeches "Here it comes again! O Help!"
Then Adam smashes a chair on its head,
And God says "I am well pleased"

And everything goes to hell.

The serpent, perverted by the cider of ego-consciousness and utilitarian logic, becomes "cockeyed" for a game of male conquest. Although he attempts to control himself and stop the process, the coherent syllable of order—the music of the spheres from "A Horrible Religious Error"—is irrevocably split. Explanations, linguistic appeals to rational logic, cannot deflect the consequences. Frustrations and defense mechanisms lead to disorder. Adam, stereotyping himself as a cuckold after a tryst between Eve and the "cockeyed" serpent, tries to hang himself, and Eve, feeling threatened even when the serpent tries to mediate, withdraws with cries of rape. The rational and the instinctual remain as irrevocably split as in the last lines of the poem, where God professes to be "well pleased," while "everything goes to hell."

With the publication of *Crow* and the revision (1972) of the main narrative of *Gaudete* (originally a 1964 screenplay²²), Hughes had taken the mythic/surrealistic poetry of the Sixties as far outward as he could go in the direction of a sociopsychological analysis of modern Western culture. Even Mrs. Davies in *Gaudete*, who sings to her pet adder in the afterglow of the randiest sexual escapade in the volume, is unable to assist in bringing the Western lure of temporal/sexual experience to fruition: her hallucinogenic mushroom sandwiches at Lumb's last Sunday night orgy function as catalysts in a sham ritual that only brings the death of Felicity, Maud, and ultimately Lumb himself.²³ Hughes had concluded that the Western cultural enterprise has "essentially vanished," and that "one had better have one's spirit invested in something that will not vanish. And this is a shifting of your foundation to completely new Holy Ground, a new divinity, one that won't be under the rubble when the churches collapse."²⁴

The direction that Hughes will explore in the late Seventies and early Eighties will be primarily inward, toward the attainment of quietude and spiritual enlightenment. But in pursuing this end Hughes will recognize that both the Oriental and the Occidental approaches can offer significant spiritual enlargement, once one ceases to consider

useless abstractions such as "Western civilization." The snakeskin of the late Seventies and early Eighties contains inscriptions from both Oriental and Occidental approaches to experience. Wonderful things happen: outer world and inner world are no longer opposed, and each period of growth in the inner world paradoxically leads to deeper, fresher perceptions of the outer world of nature. And in the process Hughes comes to revere the feminine principle once again, as he did so often in the poems of his first volume, *The Hawk in the Rain*.

In Prometheus on His Crag (197325) Prometheus, a Western culture hero, learns that he can only reconcile the daily pain of having the Vulture devour his liver by acknowledging it as a part of a purposeful natural process ending in spiritual enlargement-symbolized in the images of balance and floating in the final poem, and rendered in the completed record of his spiritual journey, the "blotched newsprint" of the sequence itself. Earlier Prometheus tried to escape his situation by dreaming of the early world of the Titans, where he exercised free, unquestioned power; in this world "two cosmic pythons, the Sea and the Sky, / Fought for the earth—a single jewel of power" (Poem #10). The pythons are either the Orphic cosmic snake Ophion in contest with the White Goddess in her snake form as Eurynome,26 or any of the many pairs of contesting Mesopotamian male and female serpent deities, locked in an elemental struggle to wrest order from chaos, that Joseph Fontenrose discusses in Python, his analysis of the Delphic myth.²⁷ Prometheus, however, must conclude that he now lives in a more prosaic world where the vulture is not only the cause of pain, but possibly a purposeful agent of spiritual development, "the Helper / Coming again to pick at the crucial knot / Of all his bonds" (Poem #20). The Gaudete "Epilogue," though it contains no serpent imagery, also follows the Western path of transmuting the pain attendant upon the persona's devotion to the White Goddess, as in the poem "I skin the skin."

On other occasions Western and Oriental paths complement, even reinforce each other. Hughes suppressed many poems originally intended for *Crow* after the 1969 death of his companion Assia, but has hinted that he may one day revise the *Crow* sequence to present Crow passing through developmental stages to attain Nature, his bride. Erow Compromises, a *Crow* poem that has only recently reached light, indicates that the process of attaining Nature may be a matter of perception, a function of the visionary psyche. Here Crow decides to worship the Western "Serpent of Intestine / Coiled in the tree of bone and crowned with teeth"; this worship entails the adoration of nature's

primitive cycle of birth and death—the "leaves of blood" and sacrificial "woman on a rude altar." But authorial irony intervenes at the end of the poem to add an additional perspective: the serpent Crow adores is also "The Faceless / God with Two Faces" —a transcendent principle beyond the phenomenal flux of opposites (cf. the *Gaudete* "Epilogue" poem "In a world where all is temporary"). The line recollects the Zen koan "'This has no face, it must be God'" from "Song of a Rat" (W, pp. 163–65), but the contrast of faceless and two-faced most properly describes either the upper and lower "great faces" of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, 30 or *ch'ang tao*, the "Nameless" or ultimate *Tao* of Lao Tzu's first chapter, realized in the phenomenal world in the two oscillating forces of yin and yang—the dark and the light faces, respectively, of the receptive female and the intuitive male.

Both Moortown and Remains of Elmet31 develop the inward orientation of Hughes's works written in the late Seventies, where an enlightened Self gains a paradise within based upon the subjective monism of the Kaballa and Taoism, with Taoist psychology and aesthetics predominating. Especially in *Remains of Elmet* the persona actively organizes his experience according to the Oriental belief in the primacy of the subjective self as the originator of experience. Freshened perceptions and intense involvement in the outer world of nature result. The persona of the first poem of "Orts" in Moortown (M, p. 134) awakens to an intuitional level of perception beyond what his "Exhausted" brain can apprehend; at this point his "eyes / Open" to "snake-headed uncoilings." The Baskin snake on the dust jacket of Moortown is a stylized version of the Serpent of Wisdom whose three and one-half coils wind about the Tree of Life in the Kaballa.³² These coils encompass the paths of ascent to the spiritual on the Tree, and thus point the way for fallen Adam once again to become Adam Kadmon, who contains within him the entire primordial world, through cultivating his inner world powers of intuition and awareness.³³ Hughes presents this process of spiritual awakening in "Adam and the Sacred Nine," the concluding sequence of poems in *Moortown*. Earlier, in "An Alchemy" (1973),³⁴ Hughes had presented nature's transformational powers as a serpentine crucible for cleansing aggression through historical coils that wind backward to their anthropological sources in "Moses' Serpent / On the Hebrew Tree," Isis as "Old Nile's Serpent," Lilith, and the Babylonian Tiamat. But only in the late Seventies could Hughes fully explore our inward potential for transformation.

Though Remains of Elmet contains no serpent poems, the central

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poems "Tree" and "A Tree" convey the Taoist process of divesting oneself of all egocentric, rational, and instinctual promptings to attain the nondeliberate "actionless action" (wu wei) described by both Lao Tzu (III, XIX, XX, XLVIII) and Chuang Tzu (VI, XV). These two poems provide a necessary conceptual orientation for understanding the Taoist serpent images of River. Taoists believe that man can relate meaningfully to nature only by freeing himself of compulsive actions prompted by his reason, ego, or instincts, and by freeing himself of fixations upon conventional goals and expectations. According to Chuang Tzu the process of shedding these habituated responses awakens the inner world powers of intuition and creativity that inevitably immerse him in important natural cycles:

To lose everything and yet possess everything, at ease in the illimitable, where all good things come to attend—this is the Way of Heaven and earth, the Virtue of the sage. So it is said, Limpidity, silence, emptiness, inaction—these are the level of Heaven and earth, the substance of the Way and its Virtue. . . . In stillness; he and the yin share a single Virtue, in motion, he and the yang share a single flow. (XV)³⁵

In "Tree" (RE, p. 47) Hughes offers a self-criticism of his indictments in the Sixties of modern Western culture. The priest who "Fulminated" against the landscape, "Excommunicated the clouds" and "Damned the wind" with rational analysis and satire, finally runs out of breath. At this very moment he senses a oneness with nature as he feels "Heaven and earth moving." He has succeeded in divesting himself of his purely cerebral weapons, as in Chuang Tzu's process of losing. Then he perceives a Reality in nature so beyond conceptualization that "words left him" and "Mind left him." Later in Remains of Elmet the tree of "A Tree" (RE, p. 63) empties itself of all rationalizations, to arrive at the wu wei point where it

Finally Resigned To be dumb.

Lets what happens to it happen.

River³⁶ continues the directive to shed one's rationalism, egocentricity, and dependency upon automatic instinctual responses to the environment, in order to refresh the psyche with the rhythms of nature. Hughes wrote in a 1970 review that "the story of the mind exiled from Nature is the story of Western man. It is the story of his progressively more desperate search for mechanical and rational and symbolic

securities, which will substitute for the spirit-confidence of the Nature he has lost."37 Whereas poems of the Sixties such as "Crow and Mama" and "Crow's Account of the Battle" illustrate the destructiveness man is capable of when he relies solely on his abstracting intellect and its technological extensions as substitute securities, River revives our spirit-confidence in nature by stripping away the excessively rational and liberating the creative intuition. Light (ming), the Taoist symbol of ontological insight into Being—as in Chuang Tzu's Heavenly Light as Absolute Mind³⁸—is the predominant symbol in Remains of Elmet. It continues to shine radiantly in River, often in context with serpent symbolism, to convey an interfusion of persona and landscape through the poet's almost mystic awareness of the healing powers of nature. In "Flesh of Light" (R, p. 7) the river's constant flow and the "inscribed scales" of the process of crafting the poem interpenetrate. The river, in its "magnetic descent" from the light of ch'ang tao, becomes a healing caduceus and a magical wand of Hermes: it is

the sun's oiled snake, dangling, fallen, The medicinal mercury creature

Sheathed with the garb, in all its inscribed scales, That it sheds And refreshes, spasming and whispering.

Hughes emphasizes a deathless coiling of energy, concentration, and purpose, and a shedding of the contingent, in the activities of birds and animals in *River*. The Heron of "Whiteness" (*R*, pp. 14–15) descends toward shallow-water salmon while "Clang / Coiling its snake," and the Mink's energetic, playful cavorting ("The Merry Mink") reveals a "snake-head" that grins "As if he were deathless" (*R*, p. 21). The pensive angler watches a "snake-headed" Cormorant ("A Cormorant") become one with "fish-action" as it dives to snatch a fish (*R*, pp. 25–26):

He sheds everything from his tail end Except fish-action, becomes fish,

Disappears from bird, Dissolving himself

Into fish, so dissolving fish naturally Into himself.

The Cormorant "becomes" a fish by shedding and dissolving his otherness—Chuang Tzu's "losing." The fisherman, the central persona of *River*, heeds this lesson; soon after the Cormorant leaves he wades into the river in "Go Fishing" (R, pp. 28–29) to "Lose words / Cease," to

"Let brain mist into moist earth" and be "Dissolved in earth-wave," as though "this flow were all plasm healing. . . ." The central persona's ability to dissolve his separateness into the ebb and flow of natural cycles in *River* regularly generates landscape poetry characterized by clarity and freshness, with great reverence for the feminine through an innocent absorption in the momentary beauty of nature, as in the "touch-melted and refrozen dot-prints" of a fox on a newly iced flood pond, in the poem "The Morning Before Christmas" (*R*, pp. 10–12). Many of the poems in *River* remind one of Liu Tsung-yüan's "River Snow" and Li Po's "Bathed and Washed," poems that rehearse the favorite Taoist image of the solitary fisherman as artist with similar delicacy and grace.

Just as Taoism derived an entire philosophy from scrupulous attention to nature's cycles and laws, so the results of Hughes's divesting himself of the purely rational to immerse himself in nature are not limited to aesthetics. Throughout River the fisherman has been stalking the treasured salmon, and only when he leaves behind his analytical faculties to immerse himself in concrete experience-as Ike McCaslin once abandoned his gun, watch, and compass-does he learn at first hand the mysteries that nature inscribes in both salmon egg and human egg. "The Gulkana" (R, pp. 53-58), a poem Hughes wrote after an actual 1980 fishing trip to the Alaskan tundra, finds the fisherman confronting the "crazed, snake-like" eye of a beached King Salmon that is far too big to eat. Hughes's lifelong quest into elemental prehistory yields the certain knowledge that fish and humans alike are "drugged victims" in the riverwhorls of time, flotsam floating toward an inevitable death in the sea. This consciousness of death recurs in other late poems in the volume that contain serpent tags: the dragonfly of "Last Act" (R, pp. 64-65), disports herself in her "snakeskin leotards" for a deathly consummation at dusk, and falling autumn leaves surprise the carefree, uroboros-like "river's twists" in "Visitation" (R, p. 75) that hitherto had "bit each other's tails, in happy play." As Hughes explores the inward/Oriental journey toward the Self his touch becomes more sensitive, less blunt, his tone more compassionate, less dour; and he has developed the ability to locate and realize more vivid, sustained images to render the fragile rush of the spirit.

As the persona of *River* immerses himself in natural cycles he becomes aware of his complicity in the process of decay and death. But instead of the surrealistic violence of the Sixties, this sense of complicity generates a greater reverence for life, a largesse of heartfelt sympathy that Taoists call *Tz'u*. In "September Salmon" (*R*, p. 66) and "October

Salmon" (R, pp. 72–74) Hughes comprehends the patience of the salmon awaiting his paternal duties in his "graveyard pool." It is a moment of sublime and stoic grandeur that prepares the reader for the final epiphany, the full moment of spiritual enlargement within the mind of an aware consciousness, of "Salmon Eggs" (R, pp. 77–79), the concluding poem of River. With liturgical imagery the persona recognizes the purpose of the natural cycle, though without obliterating its starkness: the river employs itself in renewing life, and "Only birth matters." "Fairy Flood" (R, p. 70), another late poem in the sequence, personifies this undying compulsion for generation, encoded in all organic matter, as a female river deity forever eloping from the grizzled father of the dead land. The persona perceives the river as

Of earth-serpent, with all its hoards, casting the land, like an old skin,

Pulling its body from under the eye.

At first glance readers may conclude that the Oriental inward journey in Hughes's poetry amounts to an abnormal withdrawal from what most of us consider to be daily living. Denis Donoghue summarized this argument when he stated that Hughes's poems "retreat from the genuine perplexities of history, time and society by recourse to an aboriginal world, nature free from the experience of history." This argument has in the past functioned as a starting point for critics who feel that Hughes desires a nihilistic lapse from consciousness. 40 Yet the surrealism of the Sixties was purposeful: it presented the distress of the alienated psyche in a violence-prone Western civilization, articulated the causes of that violence with plausible social psychology, and offered an Oriental perspective as a last-ditch means of preserving the subjective self. Hughes's recent, more aesthetic use of Oriental modes also has its point; one can specify some of its social import by comparing the historical situations and strategy of Lao Tzu and Hughes.

Lao Tzu lived during the collapse of the Eastern Chou, not long before the Duke of Ch'in, soon to become the first Emperor in 221 B.C., decapitated as many as 400,000 in one campaign. The Tao Tè Ching is a political document, a Mirror for Magistrates that offers wu wei as a serious method for breaking the unending challenge/response cycle of aggressive behavior that perpetuates war. The Sage is not a weak pacifist, but one who knows the cyclic laws of nature so well that he absorbs aggression, offers compassion as a response that would generate a better climate in which to resolve disputes, and limits his use of force to those situations where it becomes an unfortunate necessity. 41

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In his recent landscape poetry Hughes also counsels compassion, receptivity, and reverence for life—an appreciation of the feminine principle in nature. Through the regular absence of urban settings in his recent works Hughes may well be suggesting that those who passively accept the norms of our plastic and concrete urban environment have lost the capacity to perceive what nature can teach us about our limitations, a mutable universe, and the necessity of embracing life and savoring our moment-to-moment experience in the face of all this. He no doubt reads newspaper accounts of the atrocities and militarism that continue to afflict Western society, just as he studied the world wars during the Sixties. Currently Iranian, PLO, and IRA fanatics immolate hundreds, and superpower leaders play dangerous games of one-upmansmanship with nuclear bargaining chips while their military strategists hatch plots for space-based lasers and missile systems. But Hughes analyzed the bloodstained historical record of modern Western society in his poetry of the Sixties; in his recent work he is more concerned with offering a compensatory vision, a positive way out, just as Lao Tzu did during the decay of the Chou. Toward the contorted face of a century permanently scarred with world war and cold war, Hughes very deliberately raises his hands in a January benediction of salmon eggs and milt as he begins River, and ends the volume with a life-enhancing compassion in the "Sanctus" he sings over spawning salmon "emptying themselves for each other" in the January haze a year later.

Hughes employed his ophiolatry in the Sixties in the modernist enterprise of analyzing the outer world, of organizing what Eliot understood as the chaotic and fragmentary experience of the average man, to help him to comprehend the larger causes of our Western cultural malaise. In the late Seventies and Eighties Hughes practices his ophiolatry to develop inner spiritual resources, to counsel receptivity and the development of intuition, and to suggest that closer contact with nature does inhibit aggression. Expecting the Pentagon and the Kremlin to erect "Gone Fishing" signs is an idealist's pipe dream, but the language and content of Remains of Elmet and River are rich and sensuous enough, and the experiences rendered fulsomely enough, that they can revive in the receptive reader some of what Hughes described as a spirit-confidence in nature, and caution us against relying overmuch upon statistical analysis and facts derived from the idealand therefore unreal-conditions of the laboratory. When the reader greets Hughes's recent poetry in this wider context, as a deliberate compensatory strategy, he can perceive, as Chuang Tzu (XIV) did in

his first meeting with Lao Tzu, the presence of "dragon vision"—the wisdom that issues from a snakelike quietude of spirit enriched by lifelong meditation upon the human enterprise.

¹ Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Creative Mythology (New York: Viking,

1968), p. 154.

² See Ted Hughes, "Myth and Education," Children's Literature in Education, 1 (1970), 55–70; "Myth and Education," in Writers, Critics and Children, ed. Geoff Fox et al. (New York: Agathon, 1976), pp. 77–94. These two essays share the same title but are entirely different. See also Ekbert Faas, "Ted Hughes and Crow," London Magazine, 10 (Jan. 1971), 5–20.

³ Ted Hughes, "Quitting," rev. of Vagrancy, by Philip O'Connor, New

Statesman, 6 Sept. 1963, p. 293.

⁴ Ted Hughes, Lupercal (New York: Harper, 1960), p. 44. Subsequent cita-

tions refer to this edition, and appear parenthetically in the text as L.

⁵ Carl Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), pp. 53, 99; *Alchemical Studies*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 104, 223.

⁶ Heinrich Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, ed.

Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon, 1946), pp. 59-60, 66, 75.

- ⁷ Ted Hughes, "To F. R. at Six Months," Sewanee Review, 71 (Jan.-Mar. 1963), 85–86. Frieda was born 1 April 1960; according to the title, the poem was written in the fall of 1960.
- 8 "Theology" originally appeared as the third of "Dully Gumption's College Courses," *London Magazine*, 8 (Mar. 1961), 21. It was later collected in *Wodwo* (New York: Harper, 1967), p. 153. Subsequent citations refer to this edition, and appear parenthetically in the text as W.

⁹ Reprinted in E. A. Burtt, ed., The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha

(New York: New American Library, 1955), pp. 211-12.

¹⁰ Sylvia Plath, *Letters Home*, ed. Aurelia Schober Plath (New York: Harper, 1975), p. 445. Plath dated the letter 31 January 1962.

¹¹ Clifford H. Pope, The Giant Snakes (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 10.

12. Ibid., p. 206.

¹³ See Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*, 2nd ed. (New York: Farrar, 1966), ch. XXIV. See also Keith Sagar, *The Art of Ted Hughes*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 11, 14, 23, for Hughes's early interest in *The White Goddess*.

¹⁴ See Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," Science, 155 (1967), 1203–07; Nicholas Berdyaev, The Meaning of History (Cleve-

land: Meridian, 1962), p. 106.

¹⁵ Ted Hughes, *Recklings* (London: Turret Books, 1966); *Crow* (New York: Harper, 1971). Subsequent citations refer to these editions. *Recklings* is cited parenthetically in the text as *Rec*, and *Crow* as *C*.

¹⁶ Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, pp. 399-400, 293, 312.

17 Ibid., pp. 306-12.

¹⁸ Carl Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, ed. Aniela Jaffe, trans. Clara and Richard Winston (New York: Pantheon, 1961), pp. 331–32. In a 1964 review, Hughes alludes to a specific incident that appears on page 51 of the Jung

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autobiography. See Hughes, "Superstitions," New Statesman, 2 October 1964, p. 500.

¹⁹ Poems: Ruth Fainlight, Ted Hughes, Alan Sillitoe (London: Rainbow Press, 1971), p. 13.

²⁰ John Greenway, Literature among the Primitives (Hatboro, Pa.; Folklore

Associates, 1964), p. 93.

²¹ See also *Crow*, p. 78. In "The Lovepet" Hughes personifies the fawning, overly self-conscious love relationship of a couple as a monstrous devourer, a perversion of the natural. Like Crow in "A Horrible Religious Error," it also eats snakes.

²² See Sagar, The Art of Ted Hughes, p. 187.

²³ Ted Hughes, Gaudete (New York: Harper, 1977), pp. 92-95, 132, 140.

²⁴ Quoted in Faas, "Ted Hughes and Crow," p. 19.

²⁵ Ted Hughes, *Prometheus on His Crag* (London: Rainbow Press, 1973). Poems numbers 10 and 20 become, in the later *Moortown* reprinting, numbers 11 and 20, respectively.

²⁶ Graves, The White Goddess, pp. 62, 248.

²⁷ Joseph Fontenrose, *Python* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1959), pp. 121–76, 465–67. In the Canaanite *Poem of Baal*, for instance, Baal, a Zeus-like sky god of rainfall, thunder, and lightning, first enters into combat with Yam, a sea goddess, for dominion over the earth. Both assume serpent/dragon forms.

²⁸ Faas, Ted Hughes: The Unaccommodated Universe (Santa Barbara, Calif.:

Black Sparrow Press, 1980), pp. 116, 212-13.

²⁹ "Crow Compromises" first appears in Keith Sagar, ed., *The Achievement of Ted Hughes* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, and Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1983), p. 330.

30 Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, Adam and the Kabbalistic Tree (London: Rider,

1974), p. 30.

³¹ Ted Hughes, *Moortown* (New York: Harper, 1980); *Remains of Elmet* (New York: Harper, 1979). Subsequent citations refer to these editions. *Moortown* is cited parenthetically in the text as *M*, and *Remains of Elmet* as *RE*.

32 Gareth Knight, A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism (New York:

Samuel Weiser, 1978), I, 250.

³³ Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Quadrangle, 1974), pp. 130, 137, 152, 155, 162.

34 Ted Hughes, "An Alchemy," reprinted in Sagar, ed., The Achievement of

Ted Hughes, pp. 341-43.

35 Burton Watson, trans., The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1968), p. 168. Chapter citations to the writings of Chuang Tzu in this essay refer to the Watson edition. Chapter citations from Lao Tzu's Tao Tê Ching derive from Arthur Waley, trans., The Way and Its Power: A Study of the "Tao Tê Ching" and Its Place in Chinese Thought (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

³⁶ Ted Hughes, River (New York: Harper, 1983). Subsequent citations

refer to this edition, and appear parenthetically in the text as R.

³⁷ Ted Hughes, "The Environmental Revolution," rev. of *The Environmental Revolution* by Max Nicholson, *Your Environment*, 1 (Summer 1970), 81.

³⁸ See Chang Chung-yuan, *Creativity and Taoism* (1963; rpt. New York: Harper, 1970), pp. 80–81.

39 Denis Donoghue, untitled review of The Art of Ted Hughes, by Keith

Sagar, New Republic, 31 Jan. 1976, p. 30.

⁴⁰ See Sydney Bolt, "Ted Hughes: Laureate of Leucotomy," Delta, #42 (Feb. 1968), 4–11; Calvin Bedient, "On Ted Hughes," Critical Quarterly, 14 (Summer 1972), 103–21; Peter Cooley, "New Beasts, New Blessings," Shenandoah, 23 (Winter 1972), 88–93; David Holbrook, "Ted Hughes's Crow and the Longing for Non-Being," in The Black Rainbow, ed. Peter Abbs (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp. 32–54.

41 Holmes Welch, Taoism: The Parting of the Way, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon

Press, 1965), pp. 18-34.

Evelyn Waugh's "Ryder by Gaslight": A Postmortem

JEROME MECKIER

Truly posthumous writings, by the author himself, raise different questions than writings about him issued after his death. One could ask, for example, which, if any, of the strictly posthumous materials—letters, diaries, and a chapter of *Charles Ryder's Schooldays*—did Waugh wish succeeding generations to see? "Ryder by Gaslight" poses subtler problems than the diaries or letters: namely, does one help or hinder a novelist's growing posthumous reputation by printing a story he seems to have considered a misfire?

Michael Sissons, who gave "Ryder by Gaslight" to the *Times Literary Supplement*, conjectures that Waugh never went on with the story because "the time wasn't ripe" or else A. D. Peters, his literary agent, talked him out of proceeding.³ Be that as it may, Waugh, by not printing the piece, was consigning it to oblivion with a deliberateness impossible for him to exert upon his diaries and letters. Taking up the matter of posthumous writings, therefore, means behaving as Waugh's literary executor.

In the case of the only chapter about Ryder's schooldays that Waugh finished, one can hardly tell where executory mandate ends and exhumation begins. *Time* magazine clearly had strong reservations about the story when it first appeared in print, thirty-seven years after Waugh abandoned it. The title of its notice—"A Stillborn Son of *Brideshead*"—put the blame on Waugh's errant midwifery. Instead, one should fault the resurrection men of the Peters Agency. Sissons, its managing director, describes how Chapter One "dropped" out of an office file on Waugh. As in the *Time* review, there is the suggestion of a

birth. Better to say the opening segment has been forcibly recalled to a posthumous life Waugh never intended it to lead.

As an unpublished fragment, "Ryder by Gaslight" testifies not so much to Waugh's talent as to his sound judgment. His decision to suspend work on the novel and bury the only completed chapter probably ought not to have been reversed. The question to ask concerning *Charles Ryder's Schooldays* is not whether Waugh wished posterity to have any part of it, but why he clearly hoped it would not.

Even the popularity of *Brideshead Revisited*, Waugh must quickly have realized, could not carry *Charles Ryder's Schooldays* to glory. On the contrary, it would have worked against it, the inevitable comparison unveiling the latter's deficiencies. Branding the only existing episode a "twit's guide" to British schoolboy slang, as *Time*'s reviewer went on to do, is surely unfair, but not entirely. The fragment dwells on what Ryder himself calls "the trivial round of House politics." Who should be on the Settle? Do library privileges need to be extended? What are the niceties of a public school hierarchy in late September 1919? These were not subjects to enthrall a general audience, especially not the American readers of *Brideshead Revisited*, who had just made the author an international best-seller.

The most that can be said for "Ryder by Gaslight" is that the chapter is remarkably compact and well written. It covers events from September 24, 1919, through the 27th, four days at the beginning of term for a third-year boy in the Classical Upper Fifth at Spierpoint, a school much like Waugh's Lancing. Waugh blends dramatized events, which move forward almost entirely in dialogue, with Charles's reflections on them as they are happening and then, in retrospect, in his diary. An effective flashback to Charles's second term relates his reception of the news of his mother's death. One also savors a vignette of Ryder's father: he stops reading family prayers in August of 1914 on grounds that "there was nothing left to pray for."

Despite the high quality of flashback and vignette, however, Waugh had reason to feel uncomfortable, in 1945, about preemptions of his work. In *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), Aldous Huxley lingered over the death of Anthony Beavis' mother. He also skillfully satirized John Beavis, the boy's absurdly pedantic father. Much of Huxley's novel relies upon chapter-length excerpts from Beavis' diary, a device the novelist exploits again in the final segment of *Time Must Have a Stop* (1945), when Sebastian Barnack reviews his notes for a book that will presumably be similar to *The Perennial Philosophy*.

Four in number, the hero's main experiences in "Ryder by Gas-

light" seem intended to prove formative. Charles helps Graves, the new Head, to assemble a small hand printing press, an exercise that excites his artist's sensibility. He disowns his own illumination, by hand, of Ralph Hodgson's "The Bells of Heaven," indicating thereby a capacity for self-criticism. Defiance of "Dirty Desmond," who is on the Settle in place of more qualified aspirants, gets Ryder and his accomplices caned. Most important, Charles lends his prestige by signing Curtis-Dunne's petition for more liberal library privileges, even though this request comes from a younger boy whose eccentricities have made him unpopular. In all four instances, Ryder must reach decisions-ethical, aesthetic, or both—about where to bestow approval and support, just as he will be called upon to do several times in Brideshead Revisited. In disobeying Desmond O'Malley, a prototype for Hooper, Charles achieves a moral victory over upstarts unsuited for authority. He also rejects the liberal attitude of the new Head, who believes power will improve O'Malley's weak character.

Unfortunately, Ryder's experience of injustice scarcely matches Stephen Dedalus' first taste of it when struck across the palms by Father Dolan's pandybat. Joyce overwrites the crisis in Chapter One of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. He suggests both the hero's genuine dismay and his own realization, upon looking back at his younger self, that the punishment, despite being undeserved and eye-opening about the world, was not the catastrophe it seemed at the time. Having Ryder report on recent events in his diary seems less inventive than Joyce's double perspective. Ryder is older at Spierpoint than Dedalus at Clongowes Wood College, but his aesthetic sense and potential for heroism do not burgeon as impressively. If Waugh's point is that Charles's English schooldays are more realistic than Stephen's in Dublin, the latter still make the better story.

One passage in "Ryder by Gaslight" has frequently been singled out for praise by reviewers. Unfortunately, Ryder's crucial declaration of independence seems mishandled. Charles signs Curtis-Dunne's petition because

today and all this term he was aware of a new voice in his inner counsels, a detached, critical Hyde who intruded his presence more and more often on the conventional, intolerant, subhuman, wholly respectable Dr. Jekyll; a voice, as it were, from a more civilized age, as from the chimney corner in mid-Victorian times there used to break sometimes the sardonic laughter of grandmama, relic of Regency, a clear, outrageous, entirely self-assured disturber among the high and muddled thoughts of her whiskered descendants.

This "new voice" is clearly as important to Ryder as "the voice" of rocks, woods, and mountain torrents that a "gentle shock of mild surprise" carries into the heart of the boy of Winander. But that boy is obviously the Wordsworth who will write "Tintern Abbey," whereas Waugh, not Ryder, becomes a major satirist; he, not the Ryder of Brideshead Revisited, speaks out as the "self-assured disturber," a "voice . . . from a more civilized age."

Waugh depicts the "disturber," who is actually civilization's ultimate defense, as a second or secret self and then as a "sardonic" old lady. Individually, the images seem unattractive, only marginally appropriate. Nor do they complement each other very well. The "relic of Regency" can still puncture Victorian pretense but has been pushed to one side unceremoniously. Ryder, by contrast, is just starting out. It will not do to liken the fledgling satirist to an old crone.

Jekyll's split personality makes a dubious model for a model schoolboy, even one beginning to realize that he harbors a rebel within. Hyde is vile and violent rather than "detached" or "critical." Alluding to Stevenson's "Strange Case" is less efficacious than having an "old artificer" stand for soaring creativity. When Dedalus rebels, he identifies with Lucifer, who was splendid and majestic, at least until the moment of disobedience. When Stephen sees himself as Satan, Joyce preserves the note of mock-heroic self-inflation first sounded in the martyrdom scene with Father Dolan. Waugh accepts Ryder's view of himself as Hyde uncritically. As the debased half of Jekyll's dual nature, Hyde is simian, dwarfish, and seemingly deformed. He, not Jekyll, is "subhuman." Since Hyde proves increasingly difficult for the doctor to repress, he cannot emblematize an inner voice whose volume Waugh thinks Ryder would be wise to raise.

Waugh had already chronicled Ryder's more important schooldays in the Oxford episodes of "Et in Arcadia Ego." Many consider these the best part of *Brideshead Revisited*. Waugh's reluctance to continue *Charles Ryder's Schooldays* can be attributed to its having been precluded not only by other modern novelists but by the author himself.

Brideshead Revisited was already a bildungsroman. In Ryder's case, however, the child does not prove father to the man. Waugh challenges the premise upon which traditional novels of growth and development generally rest. Instead, the profane is prelude to the sacred. Sebastian serves as Charles's conductor to Julia and she, in turn, conducts him to God. The novel's thesis about providential signs and forerunners, a combination of typology and teleology, reverses the process of secularization Waugh maintained had ruined the Western world. It also shows

Ryder to be superior as a sign-reader to Dedalus. In *Ulysses*, the latter contends that artists like himself are born to read the "Signatures" in all things.⁵ As Waugh's picture of an artist who converts to Catholicism, Ryder parodies the alleged progress of Joyce's famous aesthete. This made it unnecessary, if not impossible, for "Ryder by Gaslight" to compete effectively with *Portrait of the Artist*.

Having encountered the wading girl in Joyce's climactic fourth chapter, Dedalus forsakes his family's faith and the possibility of priesthood. He dedicates himself to the celebration in art of profane, earthly beauty, which the apparition of the girl, virtually a replay of the Annunciation, providentially symbolizes. Thanks to Julia, Ryder's journey takes him from art to the faith Dedalus resigned. A "rider" means, among other things, an amendment. Waugh tries to amend what he considered Joyce's unfounded jubilation over Dedalus' moment of purely secular self-realization. His declaration of faith in the worth-whileness of an exclusively temporal order, Waugh objects, cannot turn out to be genuinely salvific.

After completing "The Man Who Liked Dickens," Waugh says that he "wanted to discover how the prisoner" at Chez Todd "got there." He wrote his fourth novel as a way of finding out, using the already published story as Chapter Six. It became the conclusion to A Handful of Dust, the finest of the early novels. Inquiring how Ryder reached Oxford, how he schooled himself for the all-important contacts that would lead him from the profane to the sacred or, better, from the first to a perception of the second at work in it, would have been unoriginal. Waugh would have produced a positive yet less compelling variation on his earlier success.

For Waugh to ask how Ryder passed from Spierpoint to Oxford and Brideshead was the wrong interrogative. It was right to be curious about prior events in the case of a man like Tony Last. His plight constitutes a dead end and was designed for a novel that underscores precisely that point about secular humanism. Ryder's future, not his past, demanded further examination. What would become of the thesis about life illustrated by someone like Ryder, not how had his life gone before it describes the circle that brings him back to Brideshead—that was the real question. In 1951, as Waugh began writing Men at Arms, he was undertaking the first of three novels that form the true sequel to Brideshead Revisited.

Waugh never resumed the Ryder project because, having fretted for six years since setting it aside,⁷ he finally had a better idea. Subsequent events confirmed his decision. In 1951 Anthony Powell pub-

lished A Question of Upbringing, volume one in the first of four sequential trilogies. Opening scenes at Eton outdo those at Spierpoint as thoroughly as Widmerpool eclipses "Dirty Desmond." Powell's obnoxious upstart precludes whatever uses Waugh might have had for O'Malley as a threat to traditional standards for determining excellence and advancement. If Waugh did not feel preempted by Huxley and Joyce, he would definitely have been upstaged by Powell. On the other hand, by pushing ahead with Men at Arms, Waugh staked out ground Powell would not reach until The Valley of Bones (volume seven) in 1964.

Charles Ryder's Schooldays was not discarded because Waugh shrank from in-depth self-presentation. Admittedly, he preferred deflection to what Holden Caulfield calls "all that David Copperfield kind of crap." But Sword of Honour indicates that he was not averse to the sort of intellectual autobiography Dickens practiced in Great Expectations or Voltaire in Candide. Satirists generally choose indirection when it comes to autobiography: stories that trace growth or change in their philosophical outlook. Indirection serves as a means of securing objectivity, hence of maintaining a uniformly satirical tone.

Candide is hardly Voltaire any more than Pip is Dickens. Yet in each case the young man's intellectual odyssey from a ridiculous optimism to a saner retrenchment of it clearly resembles the author's. "Ryder by Gaslight" is the *David Copperfield* Waugh decided not to write. Like *Great Expectations*, *Sword of Honour* records substantial revisions of its author's previous attitudes. These are found to have been too romantic and must be heavily revised if they are to be salvaged.

Guy Crouchback is the idea behind Ryder extended, reconsidered, and then, even though one hates to use the word, partially deconstructed. His story is Waugh's sober-minded reappraisal of the thesis Ryder encounters in the real world: that one can still "trace the workings of the divine purpose in a pagan world." Crouchback wonders if one can cooperate with it heroically and, going further, presumes to direct it. As Guy's surname suggests from the start, however, the hypothesis controlling *Brideshead Revisited* has to be modified, especially in light of England's acceptance of Stalinist Russia as an ally against Germany. This development caused Waugh much personal disappointment. Pressure from turns being taken by World War II was breaking in upon Waugh's confidence about determining divine workings even as he wrote to express it. That may help to explain the surfeit of nostalgia in *Brideshead Revisited*.

Like other modern satirical novelists, Waugh ends his career probing the validity of his own solution to the state of affairs his earlier work spent most of its energy deploring. Sword of Honour tests the realism of Brideshead Revisited in ways no account of Ryder's schooldays could have. It reinvestigates the credibility of a providential supervision for temporal concerns as a solution to the human situation. It does so as sharply as Waugh once tested the persuasiveness of Dickens' Victorian humanism against Tony Last's misadventures throughout A Handful of Dust. 10

Despite the epical dimensions of *Sword of Honour*, Waugh has great difficulty explaining God's ways to Guy. Dickens and Wilkie Collins experienced fewer problems in tracing providential designs for the benefit of their protagonists. Box-Bender resentfully notes that Guy's happiness with Domenica Plessington and Trimmer's son "turned out very conveniently" for him.¹¹ He ought to have said the outcome was providential without being spectacularly so. Waugh manages to preserve for modern fiction a sense of extraterrestrial superintendence, but only by curtailing expectations Victorian novelists had of benefits to be derived from it. *Sword of Honour* makes clearer than *Brideshead Revisited* had that recognizing God's hand in men's affairs can be a humbling experience.

God's providence, Waugh wants to emphasize, is both more demanding and less glamorous than Joyce's secularization of it. This involves a concession that Waugh's own treatment in Brideshead Revisited was too melodramatic. Waugh sent Ryder such signs as Sebastian and Julia in succession. He also allowed him to witness the twitch on the thread that pulls a dying Lord Marchmain back into the fold. Waugh put providential care in a context it was often taxing for recipients of its attentions to accept joyously. Marchmain's deathbed repentance, for example, costs Julia her scheduled marriage to Ryder. But Waugh was still not sufficiently removed from the misconception of providence as gratification of an individual's desires. This is the sort of kindness that supplied the wading girl for a Dedalus who had been anxious, since his schooldays, "to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld."12 As a bildungsroman, Charles Ryder's Schooldays would have been obliged to build toward ego-fulfillment for its protagonist. Waugh would have found this inconvenient at a time when, having shown Marchmain and Julia giving in to God, he may have felt obliged to scrutinize further the merits of submission, not of self-assertion.

Dedalus elects to serve earthly beauty in his art as a means of saying "non serviam" to Church and State alike. Guy's insistence that the war with Germany become a modern crusade sounds commendable but

is actually his way of refusing to serve God. Crouchback wants his will to be done, his view of things to prevail, not God's. Guy's military career can be called a form of apostasy; it is not just a belated example of the delusion, common in the politically oriented Thirties, that one attains a kind of salvation through immersion in larger causes.

Carlyle never ceased to regard events such as the French Revolution as divine punishments that descend on unjust nations for their crimes. This idea of providence also pervades Victorian masterpieces of melodramatic realism, particularly Bleak House and The Woman in White. Guy eventually rebukes himself for trying to convert war against Germany into a campaign against godlessness in the modern world. Such a framework, Waugh concedes, fails to apply, not because it is now a "pagan world" but because such heretical overviews are an attempt to explain God's ways to God Himself. Tracing divine purposes, Guy realizes, often means detecting the wisdom in whatever God sends.

Crouchback's role becomes virtually a parody of the more heroic mission he would like to have performed. Instead of rescuing Mme Kanyi and her people, he will, to quote Waugh's words, "rescue Trimmer's son from a disastrous upbringing." In place of Guy's grandiose, overlying pattern for international events and Ryder's belief in twitches from God for even the most recalcitrant, Waugh draws back to offer a lesser thesis: "that God creates no man without a special purpose," 14 provided he schools himself to see and accept it.

Crouchback's story is not just a failed attempt to enhance the thesis illustrated by Ryder's; one could argue that it tones down *Helena* as well. Resolving to obtain proofs of the historicity of the Crucifixion seems no less ambitious than wanting to orchestrate the defeat of godlessness in the modern age. Helena experiences miraculous confirmation that the pilgrimage she undertakes is indeed God's errand. Without vital directions from the Wandering Jew, who addresses her in a dream, Helena would not find her relics. The Jew makes an odd but effective equivalent for the wading girl, the providential messenger or living signpost provided for Dedalus. But Sword of Honour is the real continuation of Brideshead Revisited. In Helena, Waugh casts back into classical antiquity for a semi-historical, mostly legendary example of the sort of providential direction for human endeavor he would like to write about in the modern world. Difficulties Waugh had in finishing Helena—it took him five years—must have filled him with foreboding.

Waugh's recension of Sword of Honour in 1966 from a trilogy to a novel as long as Pickwick Papers or Bleak House is a revision of a revision of Brideshead Revisited. First, Guy's role was cut back to saving Trim-

mer's son instead of the world. In the recension, Waugh retrenches further by deleting two boys Guy fathered by Domenica. Crouchback tastes victory only in the form of ignominious defeat for a mistaken ideal, his and Waugh's own overestimate of the divine purpose's operations. The pattern was set when the Messiah, executed as a common criminal, accomplished the rescue of each man's soul but not, as many had foolishly hoped, of the Jewish Empire from the Romans.

The recension puts the "workings of the divine purpose" in a more modest perspective. Waugh decides that countless "workings" go on constantly in the profane world. He finds no single "purpose" to redeem the world itself, however, no master plan for national salvation, in Guy's sense of the term, and no clearly pinpointed moments of intercession to bolster the individual's faith, as happens in Ryder's case and Helena's. Instead, Guy must toil past a series of false signs or messengers, bogus forerunners, some of whom are parodies of him and his inapplicable ideals: Apthorpe, Ritchie-Hook, Trimmer, Ivor Claire, and Ludovic. Guy finally discovers a legitimate messenger and model in the last place that Dedalus, in search of Bloom, would ever have looked. He falls back upon his own saintly, unobtrusive father. Absence of a master plan for saving the world by means of World War II is part of the elder Crouchback's meaning when he discounts "Quantitative judgements." 16

In Sword of Honour, the secular arena is once again an object of unrelenting derision, and the errant hope of proving that it can be resanctified becomes still another target. Writing in the 1960s, Waugh finds modern secular society just as purposeless, just as circular, as it appeared in Decline and Fall and Vile Bodies. The crucial difference is that it is also a place in which, through a multitude of different ways and less ostentatiously than Ryder or Helena imagine, some individuals work out their salvation. Often they do so by learning, as does Guy, not to engage the world beyond a certain point.

Ensconced in the agent's house at Broome, Guy, with his second wife and Trimmer's son, establishes a pocket of sanity. Superficially, it is not unlike Mr. Pickwick's withdrawal to Dulwich after emerging, sadly disillusioned, from the Fleet. But Waugh's is clearly the more religious resolution. Dickens' secular Edens, surrogates or facsimiles of the real thing, invariably serve as final resting places; they become ends in themselves. Waugh's never take seriously the idea of the City of God as a temporal phenomenon. As did Huxley, who collapses Pala in *Island*, Waugh contends that a religious solution to the human situation has to be personal, never society-wide or national.

The protagonist of "Ryder by Gaslight" is at a much earlier stage in the struggle between participation in the world and recusancy; he is only beginning to contemplate what forms of service to render and which to withhold or refuse. Waugh apparently found this stage interesting to recall in 1945, but he must have realized it would have been a step backward for him as a thinking novelist, indeed an escape from responsibility. No matter how long Ryder's schooldays lasted, his emerging image of himself as a rebel ("detached," "outrageous") would have been insurmountable. It would have prevented him from learning to appreciate beauty and heroic humility in the necessity of Guy's surrendering unconditionally to God's will.¹⁷

Waugh's career as a satirical novelist need not have been over in 1966 with the revision of Sword of Honour into a single novel. Although resignation appears to have replaced indignation (the "self-assured disturber"), death makes it impossible to say what might otherwise have happened. Waugh took nearly a decade to round off the trilogy, six of those years between volumes two and three. This suggests he had great difficulty scaling down his former conception of the "divine purpose." It was harder to do than fashioning Helena as a trial version of a person who discerns remarkable coincidence between the task she elects and the "special purpose" for which she was created. The two form a painful discrepancy for Crouchback. One thing seems certain: Waugh could never have resumed Charles Ryder's Schooldays once he finished The End of the Battle. To do so would have been to return to 1919 as though nothing had happened in the meantime. This would have been more duplicitous than Pennyfeather's return to Scone as his own cousin.

In at least two ways, "Ryder by Gaslight," more so than diaries or letters, confirms the growing estimate of Waugh as one of the century's foremost satirical novelists. Not the lesser of these ways is by its evident inferiority to the incomparable novels Waugh chose to pursue to their close. On several of these, to mention the second way, a postmortem shows that "Ryder by Gaslight" can shed light.¹⁸

¹ Bruce Stovel, on the other hand, defines "posthumous material" broadly enough to encompass reprintings of Waugh's journalism, checklists of holdings at the Humanities Research Center, and studies of additions and deletions Waugh made to his novels in manuscript. See "Waugh at Play," *Ariel*, 14 (July 1983), 60–81.

² The editor of Waugh's letters exonerates himself for collecting them but impugns Mark Davies, who published the diaries. Waugh allegedly "foresaw"

his letters being issued. See Mark Amory, ed., The Letters of Evelyn Waugh (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), p. vii.

³ See the Times Literary Supplement for 5 March 1982, pp. 255-58. Waugh

apparently worked on the story in September-October of 1945.

⁴ When Thomas Hughes followed Tom Brown's scholastic career, he began with the hero's public school life, then moved on to Oxford.

⁵ James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 1946), p. 38.

⁶ See "Fan-Fare" in Life (8 April 1946), p. 58.

⁷ Scott-King's Modern Europe, The Loved One, and Helena—all of which were written between Brideshead Revisited and Men at Arms—cannot be dismissed as dereliction of duty. Nevertheless, they are, among other things, postponements of it. Waugh worked on "Ryder by Gaslight" and Helena simultaneously, putting the former aside first, then delaying to complete the latter until 1950.

⁸ J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (New York: Signet Books, 1959), p. 5. ⁹ Waugh's declaration of theme appeared on the inside flap of the dust jacket for *Brideshead Revisited*. It is reprinted in Martin Stannard, ed., *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 236.

¹⁰ See Jerome Meckier, "Why the Man Who Liked Dickens Reads Dickens Instead of Conrad: Waugh's A Handful of Dust," Novel, 13 (Winter 1980),

171-87.

¹¹ Evelyn Waugh, Sword of Honour (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 796.

¹² James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (New York: Viking, 1958), p. 65.

Waugh provides this statement as part of a succinct summary of the controlling ideas at work in the war trilogy. The summary appears on a card addressed to W. J. Igoe for 4 August 1961. See *Letters*, p. 571.

14 Ibid.

¹⁵ Waugh's most pointed remarks about Joyce follow closely upon completion of the war trilogy. Waugh told Julian Jebb (April 1962) that Joyce "started off writing very well, then you can watch him going mad with vanity. He ends up a lunatic." See "Evelyn Waugh" in *Writers at Work* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), pp. 110–11. It is not clear how much direction Waugh gave Frederick J. Stopp for *Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist* (1958), but he must have relished the title. Rather than alluding to Joyce, it suggests Waugh is the archetypal artist.

16 Waugh, Sword of Honour, p. 699.

¹⁷ Unconditional Surrender was the title of the third and final volume in the trilogy now known as Sword of Honour, where it gives its name to Chapter Eleven.

¹⁸ A version of this essay was presented at the special Waugh session on his posthumous writings during the 1984 meeting of the Modern Language Association in Washington, D. C.

But the Days Grow Short: A Reinterpretation of Faulkner's "Dry September"

JOHN K. CRANE

"Dry September" is one of Faulkner's best known and most characteristic stories. Even among readers who otherwise know little of Faulkner's work, many seem to know "that story where the black guy rapes the ole white woman and gets lynched." It did not happen this way, of course, but that is frequently how the tale is rememberedperhaps readers are more taken by the story's rumor and sensationalism than they would like to admit. Among Faulkner critics, however, William Van O'Connor is representative of the regular approach to the tale when he refers to it as "a story of the wretchedness, the sadism, and the shame of a man who has helped to lynch a Negro." Such interpretations tend to make McLendon the central character and downplay the story's equal emphasis upon Miss Minnie Cooper and the barber, Hawkshaw Stribling. Other interpretations, such as the well-known one by John Vickery on scapegoats and ritual,2 are interesting, but emphasize peripheral issues that Faulkner would have considered of secondary importance. Still others, respecting the title, place nearly total emphasis on the Fahrenheit reading and have the heat deterministically responsible for most of what occurs. What is needed at this point, I think, is a reinterpretation which reassesses the title's meaning and acknowledges the equal importance of three main characters rather than just one.

So many Faulkner titles verge on the gratuitous that we sometimes fail to recognize what a pointed one means—and in this case such failure of recognition garbles the interpretation of the story itself. When Cleanth Brooks finally reprimanded Faulkner critics in 1963 that

FAULKNER'S "DRY SEPTEMBER"

"it is a moot question whether it is the weather which actually provokes the men to carry out a lynching," he has, I feel, spoken rightly; but in implying that the title is more or less a red herring, he has failed to provide an alternative for why they carried out the lynching and so has fallen into a too easy disregard of the title itself.

The first evidence that the title is important is that Faulkner changed it just before publication. Apparently written in the fall of 1929, the story was sent, early in 1930, to the American Mercury under its original name—"Drouth." Though somewhat different from the version we know today, it already had its basic five-part division; however, the parts were in a different order. When the Mercury rejected it in February 1930, Faulkner revised the story somewhat, and three of these revisions are particularly important to its meaning. Most noticeably, he reversed the order of the first two sections-now the description of the heat wave came first and Minnie Cooper's background came second; the leader of the lynch mob became McLendon instead of Plunkett; and the title was changed from "Drouth" to "Dry September." In making the first change, Faulkner might have seemed to switch the emphasis from the white woman to the weather; but in making the third he would appear to undo or at least deflect that emphasis. So the issue is confused. However, it is the employment of Jackson McLendon which is perhaps the most significant in ultimately clarifying the theme of the story and the meaning of its title. (The story as we now know it was accepted by Scribner's in May 1930, and published the following January.5)

A dry September can and certainly does refer to "drouth" in this story-there is no question of that. "Bloody September twilight, aftermath of sixty-two rainless days" (p. 169)6 sets the mood from the very first sentence. One of the potential lynchers goes on to say that "'It's this durn weather. . . . It's enough to make a man do anything'" (p. 170). He is referring to the supposed rape of Minnie Cooper by Will Mayes, but surely this pertains to what he and his friends are about to do to Will as well. McLendon's face sweats throughout the story, and at the end he sits naked on his bed mopping himself dry with his shirt. The air is dead, and he has "a metallic taste at the base of the tongue" (p. 173). "Dust lay like fog in the street. The street lights hung nimbused as in water" (p. 176). Surely all this adds tremendously to the tone and mood of the story; however, I think it is wrong to take it further than that and make it—as critics often do—the fuse which ignites pent-up racial feelings in violence-prone bigots. Faulkner subtly but unmistakably shows that the motivation lies elsewhere.

"Dry September" can also refer to a very common mythical understanding of human existence. Spring is the period of youth and planting, summer of early maturity and growing, fall of middle age and harvest, winter of old age and frozen earth. September is both late summer and early autumn, but a dry one indicates both little growth (especially after July and August were the same) and poor harvest. Among people who work the land, it is a season of frustration and despair; in the normal life cycle it is a sense of lost youth and a resultantly empty middle age which will, because fruitless, blend into old age without notice.

According to Hawkshaw, Minnie Cooper is "'about forty. . . . She aint married" (p. 169). The plot of the tale can be dated to 1929 from details in a related story called "Hair." "Hair" takes place slightly after the events in "Dry September," is explicitly set in the spring of 1930 according to the text, yet Hawkshaw's age-forty-five-is virtually unchanged. The two plots would seem, then, to be set seven or eight months apart. Thus, if Minnie is forty in 1929, the date of her birth would be roughly 1889.7 She lives, and has for all her years, in a small frame house with an invalid mother and "a thin, sallow, unflagging aunt" (p. 173). Minnie sits on her porch each morning for an hour and a half, eats dinner, and lies down until the heat begins to cool. Then she spends her afternoons shopping and haggling over prices. Each year she buys three or four new dresses. Though when younger she had a reasonably appealing body that "had enabled her for a time to ride upon the crest of the town's social life" (p. 174), now she watches younger girls paired with younger men while "the sitting and lounging men did not even follow her with their eyes anymore" (p. 175). All the details here portray a deadening cyclic repetition which alters only Minnie's age and appeal.

Yet for a September to be tragically dry, whether in agriculture or in the life cycle, the spring and early summer had to have been comparatively fertile. Twelve years back Minnie had met and probably gone to bed with a cashier at the bank, a man who owned a red runabout, the first automobile in town.⁸ Four years later, or eight before the story's present time, the cashier moved to Memphis and their affair ended. Once a year he cyclically reappears in Jefferson, but not to see Minnie. Rather he attends a bachelor party at the hunting club, and neighbors make sure to tell the whisky-scented Minnie how good he looks and how prosperous he is. Just as Minnie's bright dresses contrast now with her empty and idle days with "a quality of furious unreality" (p. 175),

so does her routine-ridden fortieth year stack up badly against a time in her late-twenties and early-thirties when she was reputed to be the town adulteress and was happy to have the reputation. In the story's present time, she is without a man and without the appeal any longer to attract one.

What she does possess is her whiteness, however, and she seems to assume that this would be enough to make Jefferson believe that even a good, respectable "nigger" like Will Mayes would have to, someday, rape her. She decides on today. She makes her claim and momentarily gains both a renewed sense of sex appeal in her deranged mind and, dressed later the same day in "her sheerest underthings and stockings and a new voile dress" (p. 180), has "even the young men lounging in the doorway [tip] their hats and [follow] with their eyes the motion of her hips and legs when she passed" (p. 181). She ends her dry spell momentarily but only vicariously. As she sits in the "miniature fairy-land" of the movie house, watching the film around the double-heads of necking couples, she breaks into endless shrill laughter. She is taken home and her head packed in ice while her friends "removed the pink voile and the sheer underthings" (p. 181).

Though the actual heat and dryness of this particular Mississippi September are mentioned some two dozen times through the story, there is only one such reference in the two sections—two and four—which center on Minnie. It is, then, rather an internal heat and dry middle age which motivate her accusation of Will Mayes, with the latter definitely the stronger motive. All the detailed heat descriptions are placed in the remaining three sections, those which focus on Jackson McLendon. Yet, just as it would be incorrect to claim that the hot summer sparked Minnie to slander and, indirectly, to kill Mayes, so it would be wrong to suggest that it was any more than an intensifying circumstance with McLendon. His life is in a figurative "dry September" as well.

Jackson McLendon, changed from "Plunkett," is a man who appears in four Faulkner tales. In Light in August, he is called "Captain McLendon" and is one of those who, again at Maxey's barber shop, generate hatred and distrust of Joe Christmas. In The Town, set earlier than either Light in August or "Dry September," he organizes the local militia for the war in France and becomes captain of it. In The Mansion his history is filled in still further. Known here as Captain Mack McLendon, he is quite humane in his handling of the men of the Sartoris Rifles, protecting the likes of Tug Nightingale from those who

continually tease him. Most important of all, and a fact to which "Dry September" alludes, he was decorated for valor on the battlefield in 1917.

The date of his decoration is interesting. If this story takes place in 1929, it would be twelve years since that happened. It is also "twelve years now" (p. 174) since Minnie took up with the bank cashier. Based on what we know of the two characters, 1917, then, would be the key year in both their lives, the year when one basked in the glory of heroism and the other in the glory of scandalized public opinion. Yet that was the sum of it for both of them. By 1921 Minnie's lover was gone, and after that he is recalled by the town only once a year at Christmas. This, too, must be exactly what happened to McLendon's medal and anyone's memory of why he got it; remembrance of his heroism occurs, probably, each November 11th. Minnie's figurative "dry September" motivated her to accuse Will Mayes, and McLendon's figurative "dry September" motivated him to kill him. While few would argue that this is correct for Minnie, internal evidence might be needed to verify it for McLendon.

We are told only one extraneous thing about McLendon when the narrator identifies him on the third page of the story: "He had commanded troops at the front in France and had been decorated for valor" (p. 171). This assigns him a military context for his leadership on this occasion. When he suggests to the barbershop crowd that they have talked enough and ought to be on with the lynching, "he poised on the balls of his feet, roving his gaze" (p. 172). This is the posture of a military officer back at the barracks, not on the field, with his troops in formation before him. When another speaker steps forward to restrain McLendon, Faulkner says of him only that "he too had been a soldier" (p. 172). McLendon himself carries a heavy automatic pistolnot a rope or a rifle or a shotgun or a can of gasoline, all more useful and easily available local weapons. This is an officer's sidearm. The paragraph which describes the approach of the lynchers to the ice house where Mayes works portrays it in terms of an open frontal attack, not a covert settling of scores: "He hurled the car up and slammed to a stop, the headlights glaring on a blank wall" (p. 176). Throughout his capture and kidnapping, Mayes refers to all of them solely as "captains." Finally, when McLendon reaches home, his behavior is that of a tired soldier in retreat, scared, sweating, dirty, stripping off his battle-stained clothing, peering from the shadows of his lonely refuge.

The title of "Dry September," then, is a purposely ambiguous clue

FAULKNER'S "DRY SEPTEMBER"

to the motivation of the story's two main characters—each is entering the core of his or her middle years with one supreme achievement behind him or her and none in front. Each tries briefly to relive his or her own particular glory—one sexual and the other military—and winds up terrified by the sheer impossibility of it.

More factors than age and a dozen-year dry spell keep McLendon and Minnie Cooper, who have never met, aligned with each other in the story. Both live in very small frame houses with women-Minnie's aunt and McLendon's wife-who are strained, haggard, pale, lifeless, perhaps reminders of what is ahead for each of them. Where Minnie was supposedly attacked by a man, McLendon manhandles his wife in the final scene: "He caught her shoulder. . . . He released her and half struck, half flung her across the chair" (p. 182). Both see white womanhood as the last quality worth preserving in their small-town Southern existences, though with McLendon it ironically can be desecrated only by black men, not by his own marital violence. Both see Will Mayes as the means to their respective ends of revived glory. While McLendon is raiding the ice plant in his blind craze to capture Will, Minnie is having ice packed around her head to alleviate her crazed laughter. Both reach their climaxes this day amidst voiced suspicions that "he [Will] never done it" (p. 176).

Finally, as he frequently does, Faulkner seems to be showing the South at the height of its own dry September as well. As Percy Grimm so clearly reveals in Light in August, success in war, preferably the Civil War but another will do if one was born too late, is essential to Yoknapatawpha's sense of itself. The purity of white womanhood is another. Still a third is purity from outsiders. When the two barbers suggest that Will probably did not commit the crime, a lathered-up out-of-town salesman pops from behind his towel to unite himself with the mob's position: "'If there aint any white men in this town, you can count on me, even if I aint only a drummer and a stranger'" (p. 170). Then, to Hawkshaw's further objections, he says: "'Do you mean to tell me that you are a white man and you'll stand for it? You better go back North where you came from. The South don't want your kind here'" (p. 171). Dry Septembers abound in this scene.

Often overlooked, in connection with this point, are the actions of Hawkshaw for the remainder of the story. One of Faulkner's truly good men, Henry "Hawkshaw" Stribling appears in the story "Hair" as well. What we know of him from the two stories can be considered together, for Faulkner apparently wrote both back to back: his first attempt to place "Dry September" was on February 8, 1930, and his

first try with "Hair" was on March 20, 1930. In writing two tales about the "little, sandy-complected" barber who, "if it hadn't been for the chair . . . wouldn't have [been] recognized . . . at all" (p. 137), Faulkner, according to Blotner, was responding to a new and lifelong fictional interest: "It was as though Faulkner had become intrigued with characters he had created and was impelled to discover what would happen to them in later life." ¹³

In "Dry September," in his more famous performance, Hawkshaw tries to dissuade the lynchers from the outset and goes so far as to ride with them to the ice house to plead with them further. What is usually overlooked, though, is Hawkshaw's response to Will's attempt to break free: "he [Will] whirled and cursed them, and swept his manacled hands across their faces and slashed the barber [Hawkshaw] upon the mouth, and the barber struck him also" (p. 178; italics mine). This could be just an instinctive return of violence, of course; or it could be a manifestation of still another dry September-a Southern white man whose loyalties have been questioned several times in the story responding against a "nigger" who dared to resist him. Hereafter he ceases to defend Will. He asks McLendon to let him out but is told to jump out while the car is moving. He wrestles with the door handle. Will implores his help twice with the words "'Mr. Henry'" (p. 179). Hawkshaw leaps from the car, leaving Will to his fate. Covered with dust, he limps toward town-like Minnie and McLendon, he is spiritually depleted by the experience. Hawkshaw himself would be about forty-five this year.

Yet the story "Hair," written immediately after "Dry September," clarifies a difference we perceive between Hawkshaw and the other two central characters. Hawkshaw's life may be in a dry period in 1929; however, because his past is not solely dependent on one achievement but on a life of quiet and successful goodness, he is able to rescue himself where Minnie and McLendon cannot. According to "Hair," which is narrated from the point of view of a salesman in April 1930, Hawkshaw is "not much over forty-five" (p. 147), an age the drummer and Gavin Stevens settle on as they discuss him. This would have him born in about 1884. When he is twenty-one, that is in 1905, the girl to whom he is engaged and for whom he has been saving money for several years, Sophie Starnes, dies in her hometown of Division. As the final futile attempts to save her on her deathbed are made, Hawkshaw, for medical reasons, has to shave off her "not brown and not yellow" hair (p. 139). In her last breath she asks Hawkshaw to see to the

mortgage her lazy father left behind at his death for her mother; and each year between 1905 and 1916 he pays the interest on it and appears for two weeks each April-on the anniversary of Sophie's death-to repair the house and fences. In 1916, on her own deathbed, Mrs. Starnes underscores Sophie's request, for she will be afraid to face her husband in the afterlife unless the mortgage is paid off. So, from 1916 until 1930, Hawkshaw religiously pays the entire \$100 a year each April 16th. He spends his entire two-week vacation from Maxey's barbershop as well cleaning up and refurbishing the property, not for his own eventual use but, as the narrator says, so "those Alabama Starnes can come and take it" (p. 144). Hence, where McLendon and Minnie Cooper have succeeded only once and very publicly, Hawkshaw's past achievements are more substantially based, more ongoing, definitely more modestly concealed and less dependent upon public recognition. In fact, he apparently never told a soul what he was up to.

It can be dangerous to analyze one story on the details contained solely in another, but clearly Faulkner portrays Hawkshaw in "Dry September" as a fundamentally decent man who has enough courage to oppose a mob but not quite enough to see his convictions through. Had he never read "Hair" the reader of "Dry September" would probably see Hawkshaw exactly for what "Hair" eventually proves him to be: a man not nearly so weak as McLendon and Minnie Cooper but one who, unless he takes quick stock of himself, is in danger of becoming so. Faulkner wrote "Hair" to stress this, I think, and to enlarge upon the character in "Dry September."

In "Hair," for example, the twenty-one year old barber, realizing he will not be financially clear of the Starnes family for a full quarter-century after Sophie's death, makes no further effort to seek a wife for the next thirteen years. Then, about 1918, he begins an apparently purposeful search among small girls for one with the same "yellow-brown head" (p. 132) Sophie had, one who will be ready for marriage in the dozen more years it will take him to pay off the Starnes mortgage. When he is finally able to mark their ledger "Paid in full April 16, 1930," he marries seventeen-year-old Susan Reed, a not-blonde, not-brown haired girl he has befriended, cut hair for, and protected over the last twelve years.

At first this loyalty, devotion, and acceptance of fate, admirable in Faulkner's universe, do not seem to account for the loss of purpose Hawkshaw exhibits only eight months before his marriage in allowing

Will Mayes to be taken to his death by McLendon's mob. But actually it does if we recall one further detail from "Hair"; from about the time she was fourteen, two to three years before the lynching of Will Mayes, Susan has a reputation as the town harlot, selling or giving herself apparently to anyone. Everyone in Jefferson knows it and speaks of it, but never in front of Hawkshaw. Hawkshaw probably knows, too, but ignores it and soon becomes estranged from Susan. Instead of having him cut her hair as he has done since she was five, she sits in the chair of another barber, "filling the whole shop with noise and perfume and her [bare] legs sticking out from under the cloth" (p. 135). Despite the tenacity Hawkshaw reveals in countering the difficulties of the Starnes family for two dozen years, in Susan's case he simply gives up and allows her to go her wanton way: "Hawkshaw wouldn't look at her then. Even when he wasn't busy, he had a way of looking the same: intent and down-looking like he was making out to be busy, hiding behind the making out" (p. 135).

Whether Hawkshaw sacrifices his principles out of sheer weariness of trying to save other people from lurking doom or, as the drummer and Gavin Stevens suggest, "now the girl's gone bad on him, and he's too old to hunt up another one and raise her," the parallels between his attitude toward Susan Reed between 1927 and 1930 and his abandonment of Will Mayes on the night of his lynching in September 1929, are startling. Hawkshaw is a man of the strongest moral caliber who has allowed his standards to atrophy. It is probably too much to suggest based on textual evidence that, in "Dry September" as Hawkshaw "limped on toward town" (p. 180), he realized his deterioration and decided to reverse himself by returning to save Susan Reed. Given a man like Hawkshaw, however, he certainly could not forget a lynching without experiencing his own catharsis. In "Hair," though Faulkner is unspecific as to why he did so, clearly Hawkshaw reverses his position on Susan's downfall. When he makes his final journey to Division to pay off the Starnes home, he returns to Jefferson for only one day and finds Susan: "'they were married. He took her with him this time'" (p. 148). Faulkner, then, seems to have written "Hair" to round out the character of Hawkshaw, to establish him more fully as what he seemed to be in "Dry September": a better human being than McLendon or Minnie Cooper but subject to the same disillusionments of middle age and, almost, to the same moral passivity because of them. However, Hawkshaw possesses a substantial and disciplined character upon which to draw in order to salvage his own life and that of another. McLendon

possesses one medal and its attached memory; Minnie Cooper has one memory and sexy underwear to keep it current.

If this story had retained its original title of "Drouth," perhaps the climatic conditions could have retained the central motivational position in it, but I still doubt it—it would surely be a very atypical Faulkner story. However, with his calculated replacement of the title and then his immediate further development in another story of Hawkshaw's character from age twenty-one to forty-five, "Dry September" requires quite a different interpretation. It is first of all the story of the entry of two separate human beings into their middle years, the years of harvest, when nothing has been planted in younger life save one little seedling apiece, each of which has already died. It is the story, moreover, of two isolated individuals whose purpose in life depends not on themselves but upon their ability to live obtrusively in a way that others will recognize and celebrate. Their self-concepts, though on a much smaller scale, are quite the same as Thomas Sutpen's and those of several other Faulkner heroes who try to carve their scratches or impose their designs on the blank face of oblivion to which they are doomed. Yet Thomas Sutpen experiences a dry September as well and reacts with the same despair as McLendon and Minnie Cooper as middle age overtakes him. In contrast to such as these, however, stands the humble barber, Hawkshaw Stribling, a man who surely possesses the Faulknerian virtues of the heart but who is severely tested in his own September and nearly discovers himself to be morally dry as well.

² John Vickery, "Ritual and Theme in Faulkner's 'Dry September,'" Arizona

Quarterly, 18, No. 1 (1962), 5-14.

³ Cleanth Brooks, *The Yoknapatawpha Country* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 30.

⁴ Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography (New York: Random House, 1974),

I, 646-48.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 653-54.

⁶ All quotations from "Dry September" are taken from Collected Stories of William Faulkner (New York: Random House, n.d.), pp. 169–83, and are cited parenthetically in the text.

⁷ The narrator later suggests her age to be thirty-eight or thirty-nine; even

he is indecisive, so this could move her birth forward a year or so.

⁸ Based on conflicting evidence from the novels and stories, it is very difficult to support this claim. A man named Mr. Buffaloe, who built a car himself, is said to have introduced the automobile age to Jefferson in both *The*

¹ William Van O'Connor, *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1954), p. 68.

Town and The Reivers; and Boss Priest and Manfred de Spain also had cars very early. These novels are written much later than "Dry September," and Faulkner depends more on "who had the first one" in them than he does in his earlier short story. It is interesting that, in The Reivers, Boss Priest's new car is brought from Memphis to Jefferson by Boon Hogganbeck and a man named Wordwin, who is also a bank cashier.

- ⁹ Cf. ch. 4.
- 10 Cf. ch. 7.
- 11 Cf. ch. 8.
- 12 "Hair," Collected Stories of William Faulkner, pp. 131-48.
- 13 Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography, I, 650.

The Self-Annihilating Artists of Pale Fire

DAVID GALEF

The self-reflexive quality of Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, a fictional creation governed by its fictional creator, applies not only to the structure but also to the characters. As a group, they are self-referential, appearing as shadows, twins, and inverted images of one another. Though one may assign a central position to Kinbote as the author or manipulator, the source of his art remains in question. Critical suggestions for tracing the real Kinbote are numerous: Kinbote as a merging of Shade's artistic vision and Gradus' urge toward destruction; Kinbote as Shade's aggrandizer, with Gradus as foreshadowed doom. In the scholarly scuffle, not enough attention has been paid to a humbler figure, the character of Hazel Shade, the poet's daughter who commits suicide. Hazel functions as an interpretive key, revealing much about Kinbote and his grand extrapolation. In her cameo role, she represents the book's confabulation in miniature, the mixed success of art and annihilation.

As a character, Hazel appears only as a shadow across the work, an evoked memory. Though Shade never mentions his daughter's name in the cantos, her name is significant and provides a literary reference, a line from Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*; a stag who "deep his midnight lair had made / in lone Glenartney's hazel shade." The romance of the Western Highlands serves as an ironic commentary on the real Hazel Shade, who is utterly devoid of dark beauty. Shade's descriptions, from the anxious parents' point of view, are both sorrowful and telling:

Nature chose me so as to wrench and rend Your heart and mine. At first we'd smile and say:

"All little girls are plump" or "Jim McVey (The family oculist) will cure that slight Squint in no time." And later: "She'll be quite Pretty, you know"; and, trying to assuage The swelling torment: "That's the awkward age."³

The picture is clear enough: Hazel is obese and unattractive, saddled moreover with a disfiguring squint. The little parental lies soon give way to Shade's confession, "It was no use, no use" (p. 44). Left out of most social activities, Hazel becomes moody and introspective, a bookish type by default. In one particularly wrenching passage, Shade relates:

while children of her age
Were cast as elves and fairies on the stage
That she'd helped paint for the school pantomime,
My gentle girl appeared as Mother Time,
A bent charwoman with slop pail and broom. . . .

(p. 44)

The image directly invokes Hardy's Father Time, another child wise and soured beyond his years, also doomed to die. In Hazel's situation, the ugly appearance of life extends unforgivably to herself.

Escape into books affords a temporary solace. Academia even offers a chance to excel, albeit to the exclusion of social life:

The prizes won
In French and history, no doubt, were fun;
At Christmas parties games were rough, no doubt,
And one shy little guest might be left out.

(p. 44)

Inevitably, the scholastic seclusion becomes its own prison. She reads alone in her bedroom and the words themselves become emblematic of isolation: she pronounces *grimpen* as "Grim Pen" (p. 46), the four walls of her world.

The brief summation of Hazel's adolescence affords the same dismal view: "Alas, the dingy cygnet never turned / Into a wood duck" (p. 44). Teen-age romance is forever denied her, and the telephone remains silent. Since Hazel has become her own plaguesome reality, a change of scenery does her no good, and a trip to France only occasions more unhappiness:

And she returned in tears, with new defeats, New miseries. On days when all the streets Of College Town led to the game, she'd sit On the library steps, and read or knit. . . .

(p. 45)

She has gradually withdrawn from society but can take no comfort from her isolation. Since the world remains alienating and unchangeable, she tries to create a world of her own.

As Shade points out in his description, Hazel "might have been you, me, or some quaint blend" (p. 43), but she becomes perverse: "She had strange fears, strange fantasies, strange force / Of character . . ." (p. 45). Her father represents an edifying contrast. By his own admission, in his childhood he was "lame, asthmatic, fat" (p. 37), but was able to turn outward reality into art. Nabokov presents no clear source for the creation of good art. Hazel grows stunted from nurturing parents, while John Shade, orphaned early in life and brought up by "dear bizarre Aunt Maud" (p. 36), produces viable (there is no other word) art. If Nabokov does put forth a statement regarding art, it is concerned with the importance of connections. Aunt Maud, for instance, may have a taste for "realistic objects interlaced / With grotesque growths and images of doom," but she also lives "to hear the next babe cry" (p. 36). Morbid associations are fine, provided they are connected to life at one end.

Hazel's vision eventually turns inward, the imploded art of fantasy. The first indications are harmless enough, reversals of normal vision through palindromes: "She twisted words: pot, top, / Spider, redips. And 'powder' was 'red wop'" (p. 45). In her games with the lexicon of everyday life, she resembles her father, who enjoys the permutations of Word Golf. When words fail to transform reality to her satisfaction, however, she reaches beyond reality.

One of the words associated with Hazel is chtonic [sic] (p. 46),⁴ a key to her developing interest. Forsaking the world which has forsaken her, she finds some romance in the creation of a private spirit world. As with Eliot in Four Quartets, from which the words chthonic, grimpen, and sempiternal are borrowed, she wants to go beyond mortal experience. Unlike Eliot or her father, however, she cannot write verse but can engage only in eidolism. Taking her cue from the recent death of her great-aunt Maud, she makes havoc in the name of the returned spirit; she tries to bend natural law. A dog basket flies through the air; a scrapbook perambulates itself. Throwing things about is insufficiently arousing, however, and she succumbs to artistic elaboration. Kinbote narrates:

But soon the poltergeist ran out of ideas in connection with Aunt Maud and became, as it were, more eclectic. All the banal motions that objects are limited to in such cases were gone through in this one. Saucepans crashed in the kitchen; a snowball was

found (perhaps, prematurely) in the icebox; once or twice Sybil saw a plate sail by like a discus and land safely on the sofa; lamps kept lighting up in various parts of the house; chairs waddled away to assemble in the impassable pantry; mysterious bits of string were found on the floor; invisible revelers staggered down the staircase in the middle of the night; and one winter morning Shade, upon rising and taking a look at the weather, saw that the little table from his study upon which he kept a Bible-like Webster open at M was standing in a state of shock outdoors, on the snow. . . . (pp. 165–66)

As the parents quickly realize, Hazel is the instigator rather than the observer of these phenomena, the author of a private world of signs and images. What one may term an artistic universe, however, Shade's former typist Jane Dean labels "'an outward extension or expulsion of insanity'" (p. 166). The appraisal is not far from the truth. Where creation ceases to have any relevance to outward reality, it borders on madness. When art loses the vital connection to a world outside the artist, it becomes bound up with death. Art and obsession can become dangerously, fatally mixed.

True artistic obsession does not consume itself at once; it first expands its scope. Hazel's exploration of the spirit world resurfaces in a night vigil in an old barn, as she listens for personal messages. The barn episode is briefly mentioned in lines 345–47 of the poem and enlarged upon in Kinbote's commentary. Kinbote even goes so far as to create a mock scenario entitled "THE HAUNTED BARN" (p. 190), in which Hazel cannot bear the homey, deflating common sense of her parents. Her contact with the spirit world is moot; her hope of abstracting a pattern from what she envisions remains just a wish:

The jumble of broken words and meaningless syllables which she managed at last to collect came out in her dutiful notes as a short line of simple letter-groups. I transcribe:

pada ata lane pad not ogo old wart alan ther take feur far rant lant tal told (p. 188)

In "'The Viewer and the View,' "David Walker tries to piece together the bits to form a vague prophecy of Shade's death, but the analysis seems more wishful thinking than solid scholarship.⁵ The meaning of Hazel's recopied farrago lies rather in the process itself, as Shade notes in Canto Two: "Life is a message scribbled in the dark" (p. 41). The allusion is nonetheless sympathetic. If Hazel looks for meaning in a patternless existence or attempts to impose her own meaning, at least she cannot

be blamed. As Nabokov has Kinbote relate at the close of "THE HAUNTED BARN," "Life is hopeless, afterlife heartless" (p. 192). Nabokov's tone, filtered through Kinbote, is that of a practicing artist: Hazel's necrotic vision is a perversion of art; hence, her art is a jumble. The sympathy is not for the artistic failure, but for the suffering of another human being. Significantly, John Shade later makes a poem from the incident, showing that art can be derived from any materials, provided it does not lose its attention to life. Mad art deals too much with death.

By the time of her sad blind date, Hazel has come near to madness. Reality is once more impinging upon her, forcing her half out of this world:

She hardly ever smiled, and when she did
It was a sign of pain. She'd criticize
Ferociously our projects, and with eyes
Expressionless sit on her tumbled bed
Spreading her swollen feet, scratching her head
With psoriatic fingernails, and moan,
Murmuring dreadful words in monotone.

(p. 45)

The urge for creation and the will to hate have reached a terrifying balance. The same madness which reduces her days to misery, however, also keeps her alive. She continues to believe, in the face of all opposing evidence, that somehow circumstances may change. As Shade notes, "I think she always nursed a small mad hope" (p. 46). The failure of the date with Pete Dean kills that last hope, turning hate into self-destruction and creative evasion into the ultimate escape.

Hazel's last evening is actually her attempt to rub out her old identity. Images of blurriness and blankness pervade the scene, particularly during the fateful bus ride:

More headlights in the fog. There was no sense In window-rubbing: only some white fence And the reflector poles passed by unmasked.

"I think," she said,
"I'll get off here." "It's only Lochanhead."
"Yes, that's okay." Gripping the stang, she peered
At ghostly trees. Bus stopped. Bus disappeared.
(p. 49)

The ghostly landscape of Lochanhead is evocative of Scott's Glenartney, but in a dreary, spiritually effacing enclosure. In this white, nonreflecting scene, Father Time patrols the lake, an adumbration of

death. Hazel meets no one, however; in her last act of retreat, she is in perfect isolation: "The lake lay in the mist, its ice half drowned. / A blurry shape stepped off the reedy bank / Into a crackling, gulping swamp, and sank" (p. 51). The lake, elsewhere in the work a great reflective body, has become an opaque surface. If mirrors are reflecting surfaces elsewhere in *Pale Fire*, they are even there no substitute for life. Mirrors, rather, represent art, and both, when blurred, are an attenuation of life. Hazel herself, a "blurry shape" halfway to evisceration, has lost the contours of her appearance. In an odd sense, by submerging herself, she has become Scott's "lady of the lake." Her final remove from reality is permanent. In a last irony that Hazel might have appreciated, she remains in her parents' memory as "a domestic ghost" (p. 41), a spirit at last.

In comparison to Hazel Shade, Charles Kinbote is a far grander artist, and a work of art in his own right. In his need to transform base reality, he creates the entire kingdom of Zembla through his bizarre annotation. Moreover, the true conundrum of *Pale Fire* revolves around Kinbote, since his warped commentary creates not only new facts and characters, but also "the monstrous semblance of a novel" (p. 86), the text itself. Nonetheless, Kinbote—be he Charles II or demented Botkin—suffers the same fate as Hazel. Based on a labyrinthine structure of false mirrors and props, his fantasy world eventually encloses him, leaving him in darkness.

Through Kinbote's magniloquent self-revelations, one learns a good deal more about him than about Hazel, but without the same objectivity. One may speculate about the change in Hazel's story if she had related it herself; the fact remains that Kinbote cannot hide his madness, since it is inexorably linked with his Zemblan creation. Delusions of grandeur and attendant paranoia shine through the most glittering passages describing his royal past:

A group of especially devout Extremists calling themselves the Shadows had got together and swore to hunt down the King and kill him wherever he might be. They were, in a sense, the shadowy twins of the Karlists and indeed several had cousins or even brothers among the followers of the King. (p. 150)

Kinbote's use of the third person, rather than serving as modesty's cloak, only allows the conceits of Zembla and King Charles II full exposure. Where Hazel's art is solipsistic, Kinbote's creation is megalomaniac. Hazel, for example, shuns real mirrors, whereas Kinbote glories in them, from using "a fop's hand mirror" (p. 121) to

gazing at his multiple reflection in "a triptych of bottomless light, a really fantastic mirror, signed with a diamond . . ." (p. 111). As in Nabokov's art, Kinbote's images collect and reflect endlessly.

If the magnitude of Kinbote's creation dwarfs Hazel's, the etiology is the same: an aesthetic retreat from reality. On the most pedestrian level, Kinbote is a boringly tenacious pedant with homosexual urgencies, a lonely expatriate in America whose one claim to fame is a book on surnames. Though one cannot judge how far back Kinbote began to construct his imaginary kingdom, the conditions for its creation are well established by the time he settles in New Wye:

Often, almost nightly, throughout the spring of 1959, I had feared for my life. Solitude is the playfield of Satan. I cannot describe the depths of my loneliness and distress. There was naturally my famous neighbor just across the lane, and at one time I took in a dissipated young roomer (who generally came home long after midnight). Yet I wish to stress that cold hard core of loneliness which is not good for a displaced soul.

(p. 95)

The same embittered isolation that encompassed Hazel surrounds Kinbote. As an expatriate, he is far from home; as a homosexual in staid New Wye, he leads an inverted life; as a social misfit, he alienates everyone. As he relates in his foreword, a clubwoman "said to me in the middle of a grocery store, 'You are a remarkably disagreeable person. I fail to see how John and Sybil can stand you,' and, exasperated by my polite smile, she added: 'What's more, you are insane'" (p. 25).

Apparently, Kinbote gets along with almost no one, and his endless sexual trysts are probably more than half-imaginary. If one adds up all the people in his claimed liaisons, the figure might total half of New Wye. More revealing is the betrayal by a roomer named Bob, who brings in "a fiery-haired whore from Exton who had left her combings and reek in all three bathrooms" (pp. 26–27). Most of Kinbote's sexual escapades seem to stem from bribes on his part, and one is even led to question the handsome physiognomy with which he credits himself. A fellow faculty member, Gerald Emerald, refers to him as "the Great Beaver" (p. 24). The discrepancy between Kinbote's imagined life and his real circumstances may be greater than many critics assume. David Walker has suggested that Kinbote's motel room is actually the padded room of an asylum.⁷ One cannot rule out this possibility; in any event, Kinbote's alienation is incontrovertible.

All the factors which circumscribe Kinbote in his own little hell do not, of course, make him an artist; they merely provide the impetus for

escape. Kinbote's resemblances, or Zemblances, to Hazel do not apply only to mental anguish, though. The transformations they ring on reality are also of the same mind. Discussing Hazel's fascination with palindromes, Kinbote mentions his own predilection for turning things backward: "But then it is also true that Hazel Shade resembled me in certain respects" (p. 193). Playing with words leads inevitably to playing with worlds in a Joycean mode.8 As always, Kinbote's efforts eclipse Hazel's. Where she is content with "red wop" from "powder," Kinbote changes Jacob Gradus into d'Argus, Jacques de Grey, Jack Grey, all reflections in "a really fantastic mirror, signed with a diamond by its maker, Sudarg of Bokay" (p. 111). The obnoxious faculty member Gerald Emerald becomes, through a Russian twist, Izumrudov, "of the emerald." Nodo and Odon, two of the Shadows, are half-brothers and reversals of one another. The shades and reflections become ubiquitous. What turns up in Shade's poem may be enfolded into Kinbote's gossip anent New Wye, or triply folded into his chronicle of Zembla. The pair of Soviet spies who appear in one incarnation as Andronikov and Niagara and in another as Andron and Niagarushka (pp. 244, 255) may just be a transformation that gets out of control. The point is that while Hazel synthesizes a mirror level of meaning through words, Kinbote develops an entire world around such principles, an exegetical edifice of words. The kingdom of Zembla and Kinbote's role in it grow to include a deposed king, secret passages, crown jewels, and its own Shadows. Kinbote, though mad to think that Shade would write a poem about such an unbelievable landscape, is right in one respect: his Zembla is a work of art. Nabokov has stated, in a typically Nabokovian manner, "art, at its greatest, is fantastically deceitful and complex." In this respect, at least, he accords Kinbote an accolade.

Kinbote's dealings with reality are another matter altogether. The result of Kinbote's exegesis on Shade's poem, for instance, is deranged poetry. He consistently warps everything around him into reflections of himself, his own type of art. Fortunately for the text, Nabokov has endowed Kinbote with a brilliant imagination, in many ways more inventive and lexically interesting than Shade's. In describing a process as mundane as the ventilation of a house, he can be absolutely coruscating: "The heating system was a farce, depending as it did on registers on the floor where from the tepid exhalations of a throbbing and groaning basement furnace were transmitted to the rooms with the faintness of a moribund's last breath" (p. 19).

He is a verbal prestidigitator, not unsurprisingly in the Nabokovian vein, capable of turning dross into flowers like the conjurer mentioned in the foreword. Shade, too, is capable of artistic transformation—Kinbote uses the conjurer analogy to apply to the poet, not himself—but his art remains grounded in the mundanities of everyday life. He does deal with life, art, and death, but his approach is the opposite of Kinbote's reading public events out of his private fantasy. As Lucy Maddox points out, "Shade attempts to translate public fate into private significance. . . ." Kinbote, on the other hand, moves toward structures as vaporous as Hazel's spirits.

Kinbote's commentary on his word-creations is elucidating if somewhat skewed. He sees himself as an appropriator of patterns, a thief with artistic tendencies, but his language belies the statement:

Although I am capable, through long dabbling in blue magic, of imitating any prose in the world (but singularly enough not verse—I am a miserable rhymester), I do not consider myself a true artist, save in one matter: I can do what only a true artist can do—pounce upon the forgotten butterfly of revelation, wean myself abruptly from the habit of things, see the web of the world, and the warp and the weft of that web. Solemnly I weighed in my hand what I was carrying under my left armpit, and for a moment I found myself enriched with an indescribable amazement as if informed that fireflies were making decodable signals on behalf of stranded spirits, or that a bat was writing a legible tale of torture in the bruised and branded sky.

(p. 289)

Kinbote's art is as beautiful as it is otherworldly, but by now one must be wary of his pronunciamentos. His evaluation of the package he carries—"I was holding all Zembla pressed to my heart" (p. 289)—is a fantastic importation to the scene, having no basis in reality. Rather, all of Zembla resides in his head. The references to charmed fireflies or a Myotis sublatus writing messages hearken back to Hazel and her private world of signs. Shade's art is solid in its reassuring weight of index cards. Kinbote's and Hazel's arts, while not inferior conceptions, represent ethereal, escapist visions.

One may view the emerging parallels between Kinbote and Hazel as just that: not exact equivalencies but correspondences between the characters. Nabokov puts it more strongly: "There are no 'real' doubles in my novels." In the absence of outright doppelgängers, then, the suicide-daughter is a hazel shade of Kinbote. The affiliation between the two even helps explain certain phenomena outside their mad art. Shade's infinite patience with Kinbote, for example, makes perfect sense when one realizes that Shade sees his deranged daughter again in his next-door neighbor. If Shade is overly tolerant to Kinbote through

an Oedipal link, the relationship also works in reverse. As Phyllis Roth notes in her analysis: "The evidence of the Oedipal situation in the novel is extensive. To begin, Kinbote sees himself as the child of Sybil and John. The most apparent manifestation of this is his rivalry with their deceased daughter Hazel Shade." In fact, Kinbote's constant desire to see Shade represents more than collaring the nearest available neighbor; it is a childish bid for attention. Similarly, Hazel's attempts to subvert her parents' reality with her own fantasy are monstrously realized in Kinbote's perversion of Shade's poem. The danger lies in the fantasy taking over the artist, as well as reality.

Kinbote and Hazel suffer ultimately from a lack of relevance to their surroundings. If, as June Perry Levine suggests for a reading of the novel, "Significance is achieved by interconnection," betrayal arises through a loss of connection. The relation between the made-up image and the self is blanked out, as if one looked into a mirror and saw no reflection. Rejected by Pete Dean, Hazel becomes hazier, as others simply ignore her presence. Wrapped in her spiritual fancies, she has become a wraith even before her death. Kinbote encounters a similar betrayal when reality excludes him. Attaching his entire identity to Shade's presumed exposition of Zembla, he becomes mentally disjointed when he finds nothing of himself there:

I started to read the poem. I read faster and faster. I sped through it, snarling, as a furious young heir through an old deceiver's testament. Where were the battlements of my sunset castle? Where was Zembla the Fair? Where her spine of mountains? Where her long thrill through the mist? And my lovely flower boys, and the spectrum of the stained windows, and the Black Rose Paladins, and the whole marvelous tale? Nothing of it was there! The complex contribution I had been pressing upon him with a hypnotist's patience and a lover's urge was simply not there. Oh, but I cannot express the agony! (p. 296)

Apart from his personal myth, he is less than real; he is nonexistent. Accordingly, he attempts to re-create the entire structure of Zembla in a lonely motel room in Cedarn, Utana. Here, Kinbote shows greater imaginative force than Hazel, trying once more to resurrect himself through art. The burden of maintaining such a fantasy is too heavy, though. Not only does it exhaust the creator, but it also drags him down, further and further away from any connection with the real world. In his lucid moments, he dreams of the end of the farce he has created, the extinction of himself.

In a self-reflexive fiction, even the end is internally generated. If Hazel engineers her own finish, Kinbote creates a character for that purpose, a destructive anti-force named Gradus lurking in the Zemblan terrain. Though in some senses a mere construct, Gradus has a motivation, the act of regicide, and a personality which stands for all that Kinbote detests:

Mere springs and coils produced the inward movements of our clockwork man. He might be termed a Puritan. One essential dislike, formidable in its simplicity, pervaded his dull soul: he disliked injustice and deception. He disliked their union—they were always together—with a wooden passion that neither had, nor needed, words to express itself. (p. 152)

Gradus is against deception, Kinbote's delight; he cannot use words, Kinbote's stock-in-trade. Nonetheless, Kinbote works upon him as with all his other creations, granting him a half-dozen aliases and a woefully inept record of assassinations. As the idea of creation blooms in Kinbote's brain, so does the idea of annihilation.

Once Kinbote has created Gradus, the henchman assumes a seemingly independent existence. He leaves Zembla and follows the path of the exiled king through Europe. He even appears in Shade's poem—as noted by Kinbote—through the sinister permutations of "gradual," "gray," and the unused variant "Tanagra dust" (pp. 77, 231). Since Kinbote associates the gunman who kills Shade with Gradus, the death Gradus represents becomes paired with Shade:

His departure for Western Europe, with a sordid purpose in his heart and a loaded gun in his pocket, took place on the very day that an innocent poet was beginning Canto Two of Pale Fire. We shall accompany Gradus in constant thought, as he makes his way from distant dim Zembla to green Appalachia, through the entire length of the poem, following the road of its rhythm, riding past in a rhyme, skidding around the corner of a run-on, breathing with the caesura, swinging down to the foot of the page from line to line as from branch to branch, hiding between two words (see note to line 596), reappearing on the horizon of a new canto, steadily marching nearer in iambic motion, crossing streets, moving up with his valise on the escalator of the pentameter, stepping off, boarding a new train of thought, entering the hall of a hotel, putting out the bedlight, while Shade blots out a word, and falling asleep as the poet lays down his pen for the night. (p. 78)

The link between Shade's poetry and Gradus' journey toward America is based on Shade as the creator, yet Kinbote's own fiction is based on the poem. David Packman comments on the relation: "The novel measures its unfolding in relation to Gradus's trajectory. The road he

covers is the text's narrative line. In his journey Gradus covers real roads that, in the representation, become lines of words upon the page."¹⁴ Words create the situation and its undoing, and therein lies the double nature of Kinbote's logorrhea. As with Hazel, his art is fatally tinged. Reading Gradus into Shade's poem, he sees beyond art into death: "we cannot help reading into these lines something more than mirrorplay and mirage shimmer. We feel doom . . ." (p. 135). The artistry which produced Gradus is flawed. It embraces and encompasses death as an alternative to reality.

Though Gradus begins as something of a nullity, he begins to achieve a larger-than-life quality, overshadowing the other Zemblan figures as the notes progress:

Gradus is now much nearer to us in space and time than he was in the preceding cantos. He has short upright black hair. We can fill in the bleak oblong of his face with most of its elements such as thick eyebrows and a wart on the chin. He has a ruddy but unhealthy complexion. We see, fairly in focus, the structure of his somewhat mesmeric organs of vision. We see his melancholy nose with its crooked ridge and grooved tip. We see the mineral blue of his jaw and the gravelly pointillé of his suppressed mustache. (p. 277)

The physical closeness is startling, as if one were looking through a microscope. The personification to end the fiction has become of interest in himself as Kinbote focuses in. Nabokov, too, believes in the microscopic approach:

There is, it would seem, in the dimensional scale of the world, a kind of delicate meeting place between imagination and knowledge, a point, arrived at by diminishing large things and enlarging small things, that is intrinsically artistic.¹⁵

Nabokov, however, is capable of maintaining the proper proportion and distance. When Kinbote employs the same technique, he has fallen in love with his creation again, in this instance collaborating with his demise. He has assumed the role of a royal fugitive tracked by a gray assassin, all part of his intricate pattern. As always, the attempt is to dislocate reality, not that his friend Shade was killed by a criminal madman from the local asylum, but that the killing was the result of a continental web of intrigue and a tragicomically inept aim. In transforming Jack Gray into Jacob Gradus, though, Kinbote internalizes the figure as part of his creation. Kinbote's future promises "a bigger, more respectable, more competent Gradus" (p. 301), but since this new Gradus really sprang into being after Shade's death, he is

present from the start of Kinbote's foreword. He has become part of Kinbote's art, a destructive force in the artist's mind.

Evidence of Kinbote's concomitant desire to murder and create occurs throughout his notes, usually adjacent to a particularly unpleasant reality. Describing his betrayal at the hands of his former roomer Bob, he posits a way to halt the memory:

At times I thought that only by self-destruction could I hope to cheat the relentlessly advancing assassins who were in me, in my eardrums, in my pulse, in my skull, rather than on that constant highway looping up over me and around my heart as I dozed off only to have my sleep shattered by that drunken, impossible, unforgettable Bob's return to Candida's or Dee's former bed. (p. 97)

Self-destruction and self-aggrandizement meet in Kinbote's mind as twin evasions of circumstance. As his creation progresses, however, its poetry is insufficient to mask his drab hideaway, and the secondary solution poses an escape. The retreat into the dark, the vitiation of his creation, begins to have physical effects: "Whatever energy I possessed has quite ebbed away lately, and these excruciating headaches now make impossible the mnemonic effort and eye strain that the drawing of another such plan would demand" (p. 107). The plan referred to is the drawing of Onhava Palace, once an invention that Kinbote could have elaborated on endlessly. Now, elaboration in the face of dumb reality is draining him. When his creation draws to an end, his created existence may also flow away. In a not-to-be-missed parentheses, he hints "(see eventually my ultimate note)" (p. 101).16 In fact, as Hazel's failure at living is discernible from the start, Kinbote's end, too, begins with his introduction of himself. It is a portrait of a mind tearing itself to pieces, spewing out polychrome fragments for an imagined audience.

Kinbote heralds his mental decline from the start of his extravagant foreword. Unable to marshal his thoughts on the page, he complains of a competing reality: "There is a very loud amusement park right in front of my present lodgings" (p. 13). Lunacy has bloomed in the third paragraph. Even before that non sequitur of non sequiturs, though, he talks of "Canto Two, your favorite" (p. 13), as if he were conversing with an invisible confidant. Actually, the work is as much a confession as it is an arrogation of the text. In the conclusion to his foreword, he claims, "without my notes Shade's text simply has no human reality at all" (p. 28), but even at this early juncture one is aware

of inversions. Kinbote's own commentary is precisely the self-referential creation he claims Shade's poem is. He does have some realization of the truth, and his greatest moments of expatiation contain, as Nabokov would have considered anagramatically apt, some expiation.

As a master creator, Kinbote bows to an even greater creator, though in typically Kinbotian fashion he promulgates "our Zemblan brand of protestantism" (p. 224). Just as Hazel hung on a spirit world, Kinbote depends on an afterlife, which he views more and more as a welcome relief from "these dark evenings that are destroying my brain" (p. 123). As he develops the idea of religion in his notes, God provides the divine afflatus, the opposite of nihilistic despair. More important, God provides a comforting afterlife which Kinbote uses as a rationale for suicide:

With this divine mist of utter dependence permeating one's being, no wonder one is tempted, no wonder one weighs on one's palm with a dreamy smile the compact firearm in its case of suede leather hardly bigger than a castlegate key or a boy's seamed purse, no wonder one peers over the parapet into an inviting abyss. (p. 220)

Kinbote's interest in suicide corresponds to his tendency to fantasize. Ever the artist, he imbues the final act with a poetry of its own. Of the various means of divorcing soul from body, he prefers falling:

The ideal drop is from an aircraft, your muscles relaxed, your pilot puzzled, your packed parachute shuffled off, cast off, shrugged off—farewell, shootka (little chute)! Down you go, but all the while you feel suspended and buoyed as you somersault in slow motion like a somnolent tumbler pigeon, and sprawl supine on the eiderdown of the air, or lazily turn to embrace your pillow, enjoying every last minute of soft, deep, death-padded life, with the earth's green seesaw now above, now below, and the voluptuous crucifixion, as you stretch yourself in the growing rush, in the nearing swish, and then your loved body's obliteration in the Lap of the Lord. (p. 221)

Seen in this light, self-murder becomes more a change of scenery than the onset of darkness. Life is a shootka ("little joke" in Russian). The phrase "death-padded life" shows an artistic merging of two extremes—but death precedes. As for the scenery around him, it has become repulsive: "We who burrow in filth every day may be forgiven perhaps the one sin that ends all sins" (p. 222). Kinbote's original fantasy was to occlude base reality, and the dream of death which

supersedes it is another such attempt. What he cannot abide is a void, and once he has assured himself of a hereafter, he moves ineluctably toward it.

By the time of his last note, he has arrived at the same spiritual nadir as the suicidal Hazel. The final paragraphs have an uncanny valedictory note: "Yes, better stop. My notes and self are petering out. Gentlemen, I have suffered very much, and more than any of you can imagine" (p. 300). As to his future plans, he is hazy: other disguises, other semblances. The stage play he thinks of writing, however, shows his realization that he has invented himself: "a lunatic who intends to kill an imaginary king, another lunatic who imagines himself to be that king, and a distinguished old poet who stumbles by chance into the line of fire, and perishes in the clash between the two figments" (p. 301).

With the recognition that his existence has been a figment, he has little to do but end the game. His projections for continued existence are merely a last misdirection, an unwillingness to go out without the possibility of an encore. If, in this day and age, one can still trust the author's judgment of his work, one has only to go to Nabokov for the eschatology. In an interview, he refers to "the day on which Kinbote committed suicide (and he certainly did after putting the last touches to his edition of the poem)...."17 A consummate artist, with an emphasis on "consummate," Kinbote finishes first his commentary and then himself. As Hazel's headnote, so to speak, was "Life is a message scribbled in the dark" (p. 41), Shade's poem also provides an italicized tribute to Kinbote: "Man's life as commentary to abstruse / Unfinished poem" (p. 67). The twin epitaphs represent two existences almost irrelevant to reality, lived out rather through transmutation and fantasy. Final judgment, if not suspended, is at least moot. Nabokov obviously applauds consummate artistry, but when the vision consumes the artist, one can only laud the art and lament the means.

Though one may resent Kinbote's falsification of reality as opposed to Shade's poetic extension of life, the sympathy of the work seems to rest in the end with Kinbote. Against the arrogance of the artist, one detects a maundering vulnerability, Kinbote's recognition of himself as an aberration. "Imagine a soft, clumsy giant" (p. 17), he puts forth as a self-description in his foreword, and the evocation is apt. Here, the parallel with Hazel lends a useful perspective: both figures are freaks, in Nabokov's artistic conception and in their own artistic dreams. The author extends appreciation for their art, sympathy for their lives. This compassionate bond goes a long way toward refuting

those critics who insist that Nabokov's vision is brilliant but cold. His sense of affection, though belittling at times, might almost amount to love. As Mary McCarthy wrote:

Love is the burden of *Pale Fire*, love and loss. Love is felt as a kind of homesickness, that yearning for union described by Plato, the pining for the other half of a once-whole body, the straining of the soul's black horse to unite with the white. The sense of loss in love, of separation . . . binds mortal men in a common pattern—the elderly couple watching TV in a lighted room, and the "queer" neighbor watching them from his window. But it is most poignant in the outsider: the homely daughter stood up by her date, the refugee. . . . ¹⁸

The fatal vision of a flawed artist is always of interest to the depicter, and not just as a cautionary tale, or for the setting up of a reflexive frame. One feels tenderness for one's creations, particularly those who seem too frail for life. As for the art produced by such figures, a distorting mirror has its own special reflection.

¹ Andrew Field, in Nabokov: His Life in Art (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967),

goes so far as to suggest that Kinbote is a creation of Shade's.

² Sir Walter Scott, *The Complete Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, Cambridge ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1900), p. 156. I am indebted to Mary McCarthy's article "A Bolt from the Blue" (*New Republic*, 4 June 1962, pp. 21–27) for this reference.

³ Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (New York: Putnam's, 1962), pp. 43–44. All subsequent references refer to this edition, and are cited parenthetically in the text.

⁴ Though this misspelling of *chthonic* may be only a typographical error, it appears that way in all editions of *Pale Fire*.

⁵ David Walker, "'The Viewer and the View': Chance and Choice in Pale

Fire," Studies in American Fiction, 4: 213.

⁶ See William K. Wimsatt, ed., Alexander Pope: Selected Poetry and Prose, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, 1972). "A small mad hope" is the modern, reduced equivalent of Pope's "Hope springs eternal in the human breast: / Man never Is, but always To be blest" (An Essay on Man, Epistle I, lines 95–96). Shade was a scholar of Pope and wrote his poem in Popeian couplets. The original reference to Zembla, "At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where," also stems from An Essay on Man: Epistle II, line 224.

7 Walker, "'The Viewer and the View,'" p. 219.

⁸ The comparison with Joyce is particularly salient with respect to a passage from *Ulysses*, where Martha writes a letter to Henry Flower, a.k.a. Bloom: "I called you naughty boy because I do not like that other world" (James Joyce, *Ulysses* [New York: Random House, 1961], p. 77). The overflow from words to worlds crops up continually in ensuing passages.

9 Vladimir Nabokov, Strong Opinions (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p.

33.

10 Lucy Maddox, Nabokov's Novels in English (Athens: Univ. of Georgia

Press, 1983), p. 19.

¹¹ Alfred Appel, Jr., "An Interview with Vladimir Nabokov," in L. S. Dembo, ed., *Nabokov: The Man and His Work* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1967), p. 37.

12 Phyllis A. Roth, "The Psychology of the Double in Nabokov's Pale Fire,"

Essays in Literature (Western Illinois University), 2:222-23.

13 June Perry Levine, "Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire: 'The Method of

Composition' as Hero," in International Fiction Review, 5:108.

14 David Packman, "Pale Fire: The Vertigo of Interpretation," in his Vladimir Nabokov: The Structure of Literary Desire (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1982), p. 83.

15 Vladimir Nabokov, Speak, Memory (New York: Putnam's, 1966), pp.

166-67.

¹⁶ Nabokov's use of parentheses would make a small study in itself. He is the only author I am aware of who regularly locates the most significant part of a sentence within real or tonal brackets.

¹⁷ Appel, "An Interview with Vladimir Nabokov," p. 29.

18 McCarthy, "A Bolt from the Blue," p. 26.

Color in To the Lighthouse

JACK F. STEWART

According to Virginia Woolf, "painting and writing . . . have much in common. The novelist after all wants to make us see. . . . It is a very complex business, the mixing and marrying of words that goes on, probably unconsciously, in the poet's mind to feed the reader's eye. All great writers are great colourists. . . ." While "sound and sight seem to make equal parts of [her] first impressions," Woolf stresses their painterly quality.²

In To the Lighthouse, Woolf's search for spiritual essences is expressed in light and color.³ Johannes Itten's metaphysic of light and color illuminates the relation between creative source (Mrs. Ramsay/the Lighthouse) and creative artist (Lily Briscoe/the painting) in Woolf's novel.⁴ Itten (AC, p. 153) further affirms that "the end and aim of all artistic endeavor is liberation of the spiritual essence of form and color and its release from imprisonment in the world of objects." Woolf's art does not reach so far toward abstraction, but she does imply that the "luminous halo" of consciousness should be conveyed through equivalents of "plastic form," and notes that "fiction is given the capacity to deal with 'psychological volumes.'"⁵

Roger Fry thought literature should parallel painting: "The Post-Impressionist movement . . . was by no means confined to painting. . . . Cézanne and Picasso had shown the way; writers should fling representation to the winds and follow suit. But he never found time to work out his theory of the influence of Post-Impressionism upon literature"—as Woolf ironically remarks (RF, p. 149). She herself accepted the challenge of designing a literary art closer to the plastic values of painting. While Fry championed the post-impressionists' "attempt to express by pictorial and plastic form certain spiritual experiences'" (RF, p. 154), Woolf urged novelists "to convey this varying, this unknown and uncir-

cumscribed spirit. . . ."⁶ Fry's emphasis on formal relations merges fruitfully with Woolf's pursuit of being, as her art advances from the fragmentary impressionism of *Jacob's Room* to the luminous structure of *To the Lighthouse*. There revolving lights and colors play on the reader's sensibility like light waves on the retina, and characters come to be known by their *auras*.

The impressionists did not confine colors within the outlines of objects (as the rationalizing mind does), but observed how light spills over from one object to the next. Thus they gave objects a "luminous halo" or aureole of color. As a verbal colorist, Woolf desires "to paint men and women with that something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolize, and which we seek to confer by the actual radiance and vibration of our coloring." But in *To the Lighthouse* her art goes beyond impressionism and symbolism toward a flexible form that "does not shut out." The consciousness of each character tends to overflow individual boundaries, mingling its colors with those around it, as it modifies the total pattern. These interactions recall the post-impressionism of Cézanne, who wished "to represent things in their interrelationship in space," while still using "colour in its original significance."

While color in the novel expresses individual qualities, color/ character associations are not reducible to one-to-one symbolic equations.9 Woolf wanted to find literary equivalents for "that pleasure which we gain from seeing beauty, proportion, contrast, and harmony of colour in the things around us"10-and which Delacroix considers the exclusive property of painting. Beyond the sensuous immediacy of impressionism lay the constructive color of Cézanne, whose art symbolized nothing in particular, but "turned all external appearances of real things into a symbol of 'being,' 'which is eternal'" (C, p. 270). To the Lighthouse shares with Cézanne's painting a vital duality of aesthetic image, that mirrors actual sensations and emotions, and symbolic form, that mirrors its own "process of construction." When Badt (C, p. 72) speaks of blue as a "symbolic form," he is concerned with a structural quality and not with symbolic meaning. Blue, in Cézanne's painting, does not stand for something outside itself, but locks other colors together in harmony. The experience of color relations is more than an optical sensation: it is a complex experience hard to put into words, a stimulus and a revelation.

Color is a sensitive medium for expressing both individual and universal experience. While color in literature inevitably gravitates toward symbolic associations, Woolf manipulates rhythmic inter-

relationships to create an overall plastic design, inwardly mirrored in the image of painting. Lily Briscoe is one of those post-impressionist artists who "do not seek to imitate form, but to create form, not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life" (Fry, as quoted by Woolf in RF, p. 154). While the novel illuminates life, it completes its significance within the magic circle of art. Woolf accomplishes this condensation by seeking out "plastic equivalents" and constructing a virtual space that incorporates many of the subtle properties of color contrast. Color in the novel is not only an equivalent of feeling, it is also a component of form. The variously tinted streams of consciousness interconnect, so that "geometric colour" becomes a structural principle as in Cézanne's painting.¹¹

What Cézanne says of shape and color applies to *To the Lighthouse*: "The outline and the colors are no longer distinct from each other. To the extent that one paints, one outlines; the more the colors harmonize, the more the outline becomes precise. . . . When the color is at its richest, the form has reached plenitude." ¹² Merleau-Ponty's comment (p. 16) on Cézanne's portraiture can be applied, with slight modifications, to Woolf's characterization: "One's personality is seen and grasped in one's glance, which is, however, no more than a combination of colors." In the novel, the single "glance" becomes a series of subjective reflections, and "personality" a complex of sense perceptions,

memories, verbal rhythms, and color.

Just as white light refracted through a prism produces the seven colors of the spectrum, so being refracted through self produces the psychological spectrum of the novel. To the Lighthouse is built on a nexus of light and color. Its Neoplatonic theme is the relation of the One to the many, the noumenal to the phenomenal. What Itten (AC, p. 30) says of his students' "color combinations" applies to Woolf's characters: "Intrinsic constitution and structures are reflected in the colors, which are generated by dispersion and filtration of the white light of life and by electromagnetic vibrations in the psycho-physiological medium of the individual." Objects do not have colors, but for the eye all objects exposed to light absorb some rays and reflect others. Only Mrs. Ramsay, as she identifies with the light (TL, p. 97), or enters the "wedgeshaped core of darkness" (TL, p. 95), transcends colorific diffraction and becomes pure being. After "burning and illuminating" (TL, p. 58), she sinks back through the violet end of the spectrum (Lily's "purple shadow" [TL, p. 81]) to achromatic invisibility (TL, p. 95). "If the light which falls on a body is completely absorbed by that body," says Chevreul, "so that it disappears from sight, as in falling into a perfectly dark

cavity, then the body appears to us as black..."¹³ Mrs. Ramsay's absorptive powers are seen in her withdrawal into darkness, but she is also a powerful reflector of light, who illuminates other lives (*TL*, p. 160). In this oscillation she emulates the lighthouse with its revolving beams. Her powers of absorption and reflection relate to a rhythmic embrace of light and darkness symbolized in the Tao, and ultimately to the "white light" of cosmic being.

If Mrs. Ramsay relates to Light as essence, 14 Lily relates to Color as the contingent substance of reality and art (TL, p. 75). Part I, "The Window," is dominated by the transcendent symbol of the Light, Part II, "Time Passes," by darkness and silence, and Part III, "The Lighthouse," by the refraction of Mrs. Ramsay's spiritual light into action (the voyage) and form and color (Lily's painting). At one end of the spectrum, Mr. Ramsay's intellectual vision dissolves in infrared rays; at the other, Mrs. Ramsay's spiritual vision dissolves in a blue haze bordering on ultraviolet. In his discussion of "Coloured Spaces in the Prismatic Spectrum," Ogden Rood observes that "the space out beyond 0 is occupied by a very dark red. . . and outside of the violet beyond 1,000 is a faint greyish colour, which has been called lavender."15 Rood (MC, p. 106) adds that "the eye seems far more sensitive to changes of wavelength in the middle regions of the spectrum than at either extremity." A similar blurring at the ends and sensitivity in the middle can be observed in To the Lighthouse, where green and yellow are associated with the androgynous, aesthetic vision of Lily and Carmichael. A synthesis of blue and red extremes appears in the "triangular purple shape" on Lily's canvas, a momentary negation of the entire spectrum in James's close-up view of the lighthouse as a "black and white" structure.

Within a given band of the spectrum, the dominant color serves to express related qualities of several characters. In the novel, color permeates the various streams of consciousness and is also an element in the overall design. As in Cézanne's painting, "the whole canvas is a tapestry where each colour *plays* separately and yet at the same time fuses its sonority in the total effect." The various *reds* form a masculine complex including Mr. Ramsay's red-hot pokers, red geraniums, and reddish-brown hedge; the reddish-brown stocking that Mrs. Ramsay is knitting for the lighthouse-keeper's son; her image of James "all red and ermine on the Bench"; Paul Rayley's blaze of amorous passion; and Charles Tansley's red raucousness. The feminine/intuitive wavelengths are more flexibly varied than the dense red glow of male egotism. *Blue* and *green* are frequently combined—blue associated with

sea, distance, transcendence; green with "flowing grasses," green shawl, illusion, and imagination. Yellow—Mr. Carmichael's eyes and opium, the "yellow eye" of the lighthouse, the "pure lemon" of its beams, the harvest moon—is associated with meditation and intoxication. As for specific auras, Paul is associated with "a reddish light" (TL, p. 261), Cam with a "green light" (TL, p. 272), James's memory of his mother with "a blue light" (TL, p. 278), and Mrs. Ramsay with "the light of the Lighthouse" itself (TL, p. 94). In "Time Passes," the shade of Mrs. Ramsay's spirit is gray—which lies outside the spectrum. Physiologically, "neutral gray" is appropriate to this visionary, transitional phase, as it combines "dissimilation" and "assimilation," "consumption" and "regeneration" of the optic substance. Thus, when Mrs. Ramsay's spirit revives to reanimate the voyage and the painting, the "essence" of "that woman in grey" (TL, p. 266) is a paradoxical fusion of presence and absence, fullness and emptiness, color and colorlessness—just as gray is the "abstract" of all complementaries and of all colors combined.

Mrs. Ramsay discusses local artists with Charles Tansley, who infers that "the colours [aren't] solid" (*TL*, p. 24). This is a clue to Lily's art, which, like Cézanne's, is a structuring of space through mass and color: "The jacmanna was bright violet; the wall staring white. She would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white since she saw them like that, fashionable though it was, since Mr. Paunceforte's visit, to see everything pale, elegant, semitransparent" (*TL*, pp. 31–32). Lily's X-ray eyes, that so easily anatomize Tansley, look for an underlying architecture in nature that can support the intensity of her color vision. She does not want "the colour [to be] thinned and faded; the shapes etherealised" (*TL*, p. 75); she has glimpses of a more constructive vision: "She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral" (*Ibid.*). This stereoscopic vision fuses surface and depths, color and form, impressionist radiance and post-impressionist structure. Its leading exponents are Cézanne in painting, and Proust in literature.¹⁸

For Lily, as she dips into luscious blue or glistening red, or squeezes thick green pigment onto her palette, "Color expresses something in itself" 19 She does not analyze her emotions: she feels "some instinctive need of distance and blue" (TL, p. 270), and "dip[ping] into the blue paint, she [dips] too into the past there" (TL, p. 256). The antithesis of her sensuous vision is Mr. Ramsay's abstract philosophy, symbolized by a kitchen table: "something visionary, austere; something bare, hard, nor ornamental. There was no colour to it; it was all edges

and angles; it was uncompromisingly plain" (TL, p. 232; my italics). Andrew first proposed the image to illustrate Berkeley's theory of perception, but in Lily's mind the table becomes a surreal emblem of Locke's "primary qualities" of shape and extension, divorced from "secondary qualities" of color and feeling. She sees "a phantom kitchen table" (emblem of the "muscular integrity" of the male mind) grotesquely superimposed upon the sensuous reality of a pear tree, and reflects: "Naturally, if one's days were passed in this seeing of angular essences, this reducing of lovely evenings, with all their flamingo clouds and blue and silver to a white deal four-legged table (and it was a mark of the finest minds so to do) . . . one could not be judged like an ordinary person" (TL, p. 38).

Locke's assumption of the primacy of form over color puts him squarely in the masculine/intellectual tradition of Mr. Ramsay (who is planning a lecture on Locke, Hume, and Berkeley [TL, p. 70]). Lily's task is not to reject such empiricism, but to marry it to Mrs. Ramsay's mysticism: "One wanted, she thought, dipping her brush deliberately . . . to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy" (TL, pp. 299–300). Clearly this dual way of seeing, at once true to the object and expressive of the subject, combines two ways of looking represented by the two Ramsays. The artist's imagination transforms the bare idea ("Think of a table when you're not there") into a sensory image, reversing the Lockean process whereby sense impressions are transformed into ideas.

Working counter to the mathematical/philosophical thought of Andrew and his father, Lily's mind (like Cézanne's) perceives the bare structure of reality, but clothes it in sensuous light. Similarly, James achieves double vision of the lighthouse as an achromatic structure and as "a misty-looking tower with a yellow eye" (*TL*, p. 276)—fusing daylight and nighttime vision, fact and fancy, yin and yang. Only the androgynous artist can reveal "the nature of reality" as a matter of shifting perceptions, at once objective and subjective, analytic and sensuous. This twofold grasp of reality is characteristic of Cézanne's art, which achieves, in Denis' words, "an equilibrium, a reconciliation of the objective and subjective," in an effect "at once shimmering and forcible" (*D*, pp. 213, 279).

Unconsciously Lily strives to create an "androgynous form" that will be the equivalent of harmonious being:

Heaven be praised for it, the problem of space remained, she thought, taking up her brush again. . . . The whole mass of the picture was poised upon that weight. Beautiful and bright it

should be on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly's wing; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron. It was to be a thing you could ruffle with your breath; and a thing you could not dislodge with a team of horses. And she began to lay on a red, a grey, and she began to model her way into the hollow there. (TL, p. 255)

Lily is tackling a fertile dilemma, for, as Anton Ehrenzweig remarks, "in the conflict between strong colour and strong form each adversary grows in stature and power through their mutual confrontation. . . . Strong form and space inhibit colour interaction while strong colour interaction obliterates form and space." Lily brings this dialectic to a "razor edge of balance between two opposite forces" (*TL*, p. 287). The forces that have been released battle for domination of the picture space: Lily feels the plastic stress disrupt the flat surface of her canvas, and threaten her own psychic balance (*TL*, p. 236). The more she plunges into her painting and tackles the problems of color and form, the more she encounters the unconscious substructure of her personality.

Blue is the visionary color for Woolf. In her sketch, "Monday or Tuesday," "space rushes blue," while the narrator of "An Unwritten Novel," seeking spatial form, exclaims: "There's the vista and the vision—there's the distance—the blue blot at the end of the avenue"21 William Gaunt notes the importance to the impressionists of primary blue as "the atmospheric colour par excellence of sky and distance,"22 while Émile Bernard observes of Cézanne's aquamarine that "in fact, the atmosphere is this blue; in nature it is always found over and around objects and they merge into it the more they draw away towards the horizon."23 Blue, in To the Lighthouse, is associated with sea, sky, a bird's plumage (TL, p. 45), shadows of the hedge (TL, p. 234), pigments on Lily's palette or canvas (TL, pp. 237, 238, 256, 308), a parental shadow (TL, p. 251), distance and vision (TL, pp. 270, 284), Mrs. Ramsay's aura (TL, p. 278), the reflecting surface of the sea (TL, p. 284), smoke and unreality (TL, p. 285), the microcosmic form of the island fading like memory in the distance (TL, p. 307), and the eyes of all the male characters except the poet Carmichael.

James encounters the shade of his mother "in a blue light" (*TL*, p. 278) associated with coolness, memory, and truth. The persistence of blue in memory—its spiritual power—would be greater than that of red, for, as illumination declines, "colors of long wave lengths (reds) will fade out sooner than colors of short wave lengths (blues)."²⁴ To

James, his mother has become an aura, rather than a figure with clear outlines. The blue wavelength is naturally related to Mrs. Ramsay's Madonna role, for "blue light . . . is very difficult for the eye to focus and will cause objects to appear blurred and surrounded by halos" (CFS, p. 45). As a colorist, Woolf's intuitions are remarkably close to optical phenomena. Even in a most lyrical description of Mrs. Ramsay's response to the light—"it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon . . ." (TL, p. 99)—Woolf's color observation is accurate, for "an ultramarine blue surface does not reflect the yellow wavelengths, but only the blue." The seaward-looking Mrs. Ramsay achieves ecstasy through an alternation of complementary colors, mediating a deeper interplay of light and darkness.

Mrs. Ramsay's peculiar combination of radiance and somberness-at one extreme, "'blue is darkness made visible'"26-agrees with the tonal range of blue from height to depth, sky to sea, "bright steel to soft purple" (TL, p. 45), and blue-white to blue-black. "[Blue] is the only colour which can be seen as a close neighbour to and essentially akin to both dark and light . . ." (C, p. 58). The fluctuating intensities of blue relate it to the rise and fall of Mrs. Ramsay's animating energies. For Kandinsky, "the tendency of blue to deepen is so strong that in fact it becomes intrinsically more intense and characteristic in deep tones," while for Goethe blue "at its highest degree of purity ... is like a stimulating negation" (cited in C, p. 59). The dual extremes of palest and darkest blue relate to the light/darkness duality of Mrs. Ramsay's being. Despite her strong affinity with the stern, searching, beautiful light—"it seemed to her like her own eyes meeting her own eyes ..." (TL, p. 97)—she alternately finds her true being in the "wedge-shaped core of darkness" (TL, p. 95), which gives freedom, peace, and stability. With rhythmic oscillations, like those of the lighthouse beam, she plunges into ecstatic or contemplative moods that are equally impersonal—as if fusing life and death in a single rhythm. While these states lie beyond the spectrum, with its individual chromatic differences, it is a fact that blue, above all colors, is capable of diffusion or condensation into light or darkness, day or night-being, as Denis says, the very color of the atmosphere.

Mrs. Ramsay's spiritual experience is mediated by images of light and darkness, but her sensory response to the lighthouse is keyed to color contrast: the "blue" of the waves in daylight is succeeded by the "pure lemon" of the beams in darkness (*TL*, p. 99). Behind this interaction of colors lies a fluid interchange of opposites²⁷—waves of

darkness in light and light in darkness—that stimulates Mrs. Ramsay's ecstatic moment of being. Just as she sinks her being in darkness or expands to meet the light, so she is associated with a whole range of color—that is, the reader's response to blue in various contexts and degrees of saturation merges with his response to the character's stream of consciousness, so that chromatic sensations are progressively fused with spiritual equivalents. This fusion of color and being matches the actual fusion of color and form that Lily strives for in her painting.

The "total effect of blue" involves "a complete reconciliation of the opposing qualities of 'excitement and repose'" (*C*, p. 59). This makes blue the color of creative imagination. James and Lily seek integration (psychological and aesthetic) through memories of Mrs. Ramsay steeped in ideal or actual blue. Their unconscious needs are transposed into color sensations, and this process works for the reader too. Lily's sense of time, for instance, is related to the vertical range of blue. The present moment is "like a drop of silver in which one dipped and illumined the darkness of the past," while the past itself is identified with her "blue paint" (*TL*, p. 256). Lily's need of blue parallels Cézanne's, for "it is blue . . . the colour with which it is possible to blend most other colours in harmonious and rich conjunctions (unlike brown, to which it is infinitely superior from the colourist's point of view), which gives definition to this existence based wholly on colour . . " (*C*, p. 81). Nietzsche says that "in books there are blue shades of colour with which their author seeks to steady his taut sensitivity" (quoted in *C*, p. 60), and this may be true of Woolf herself in *To the Lighthouse*.

Considering Mrs. Ramsay's energizing role in her marriage, it is ironic to note that "cool hues such as blue and violet, being passive, make ideal backgrounds." However, her encouraging attitude toward her husband, children, and protegés makes her at least a potential source of harmony. Blue may be used as a background to show off other colors. Thus Van Gogh aimed to "paint infinity, [as] a plain background of the richest, intensest blue" (CL, pp. 3, 6), and Cézanne told Bernard: "Blue gives other colours their vibration, so one must bring a certain amount of blue into a painting" (quoted in C, p. 57). Mrs. Ramsay provides the visionary "background" of Woolf's novel, its sense of spiritual space and depth, but her wavelike outpourings of energy in support of others exhaust her individual "chroma," leaving her to seek light and darkness beyond the human spectrum. Red and blue are often found in conjunction in the novel. Itten

Red and blue are often found in conjunction in the novel. Itten (AC, p. 68) describes the conjunction of red and blue in "La Belle Verrière," a stained-glass window in Chartres Cathedral: "This

Madonna is the Queen of Heaven, born of the primeval cosmic blue. She shines like a young star with cold energy, surrounded by the red light of matter. The Child, the incarnate Son of God, is garbed in dark red." This contrast parallels that of mother and son in To the Lighthouse, where Mrs. Ramsay imagines James, with "his fierce blue eyes," growing up to be "all red and ermine on the Bench" (TL, p. 10), while she herself, a Madonna figure who "[has] the whole of the other sex under her protection," is associated with "the great plateful of blue water ..." (TL, p. 23). Under her tutelage, Charles Tansley, whose life lacks grace or pleasure, watches a man posting a circus bill in "glistening reds and blues" (TL, p. 21). These separate intensities of hue caricature the clash of opposties embodied in the Ramsays. With red and blue there must either be conflict or chromatic marriage resulting in some shade of purple.29 Tansley, despite his "purple book" (TL, p. 238), fails to achieve integration between the restless red of his ego and the tranquilizing blue of Mrs. Ramsay's spirit, and so remains dehumanized at one end of the spectrum, with the "red, energetic, shiny ants" (TL, p. 293). But Lily, who synthesizes spiritual rays of mother and son into a "triangular purple shape" (TL, p. 81), is "moved"—after an outburst of imaginary red (TL, pp. 261-62)—"by some instinctive need of distance and blue" (TL, p. 270) that helps her to harmonize her painting. Her synthetic view of Mrs. Ramsay and James merges their auras, and integrates their figures in a pyramidal structure characteristic of Renaissance religious art. The resultant purple triangle is also, in its tripartite form, a plastic abstraction of the fictional shape that Woolf creates from her own experience.

The vivid contrast of red and blue in painting goes back at least to Titian, who "intensified the blue of the horizon beyond all natural verisimilitude, and intensified the colours of the sky and the sea to such a degree that they acquired completely equal status with the reds" (*C*, pp. 69–70). In balancing her foreground and background colors, Woolf is also balancing the "psychological volumes" of the Ramsays. Their marriage brings into contact opposite wavelengths of red and blue that, in ideal synthesis, would create the impersonal illumination of white light. The color red is associated with effort and excitation. Mr. Ramsay's vision is blocked, giving more heat than light: "[the] break in the thick hedge, [was] guarded by red hot pokers like braziers of clear burning coal, between which the blue waters of the bay looked bluer than ever" (*TL*, p. 33). The point of view is that of Lily and Bankes, but they are looking at the color tones of the Ramsays, who form the spiritual axis of the novel. In *To the Lighthouse*, mental and

spiritual, personal and impersonal energies are polarized in juxtapositions of red and blue.

Mr. Ramsay's ego conflicts (red tonality) emphasize the desirability of impersonal vision (blue). Blue, the maternal/visionary color, is associated with liberation and expansion: "First, the pulse of colour flooded the bay with blue, and the heart expanded with it and the body swam ..." (TL, p. 33). For Lily and Bankes, this glimpse of transcendence is quickly "checked and chilled by the prickly blackness" (Ibid.)suggesting their personal limitations. Similarly, the infrared blur that obscures the alphabet from the letter R on suggests the limits set by Mr. Ramsay's identity. Instead of a "pulse of colour" that signifies a response to light and life, there is a hectic pulse of blood that signals forcing of the will: "The veins on his forehead bulged. The geranium in the urn became startlingly visible . . ." (TL, p. 54). The bloodred blur is a symptom of self-blinded ego, for one sees red if one closes one's eyes against the light. The prominence of geraniums and veins implies a consciousness suffused and overheated with itself.30 The geraniums provide an objective correlative of Mr. Ramsay's thought patterns, but when he "[lowers] his gaze" to the flowers around him, he notices only "something red, something brown" (TL, p. 102). The lighthouse itself is glimpsed "between the two clumps of red-hot pokers" (TL, p. 104), as the blue bay had been through the hedge. Thus the hyperintense quality of volition is thrown into relief against the cool blue of spiritual vision. Even Mrs. Ramsay's sympathetic assertion of fantasy in the face of fact—" 'Perhaps you will wake up and find the sun shining and the birds singing' "(TL, p. 26)—is consistent with color interactions, for "blue on red-orange retains its dark figure, yet becomes luminous, asserting and maintaining its strange unreality" (AC, p. 136; my italics). Mrs. Ramsay's imagination ultimately has the power to modify her husband's actions—just as his actions are destined to fulfill her unrealized dream.

Optical imagery occurs in the contrast between farsighted Mr. Ramsay and his nearsighted wife. Woolf's accuracy appears again, for "the eye focus[es] differently to different colors (farsighted for red, nearsighted for blue) . . ." (CFS, p. 60). As L. Moholy-Nagy explains: "Red makes the eye 'far-sighted,' by causing the lens to grow thicker. This action will give red a nearer position than blue which causes the eye to grow 'near-sighted' as it flattens the lens." Mrs. Ramsay's vision is linked with the euphoric "pulse of colour [that] flooded the bay with blue" (TL, p. 33), yet she is so "short-sighted" (TL, pp. 21, 48, 109) that she cannot distinguish between "a lobster pot" and an "upturned boat"

(TL, p. 239). In the color-coding of the Ramsays, blue is associated with distance, imagination, shortsightedness; red with closeness, rationality, farsightedness. Mrs. Ramsay gazes out through the window, taking a long view over the bay; Mr. Ramsay gazes into the intricate detail of the hedge. Both kinds of looking have their drawbacks. The long view is free of complexity but unfocused—"Blue and purple become hopelessly lost to blur in darkness and distance" (CFS, p. 45)—while the short view is accurate but unsynthesized. If one thematic pole of the novel is merging—which dissolves individual outlines—the other is separating, which defines outlines in painful detail, while losing sight of the whole. In a balanced vision, these two modes of seeing—one synthetic, fusing the alphabet into a unity, the other analytic, breaking thought into a sequence of letters—must reinforce each other. The eye of the artist strives to see the object two ways—as a structure of parts and as a luminous whole.

Mrs. Ramsay knits a "reddish-brown" stocking for the lighthouse keeper's boy, and ten years later Mr. Ramsay sets off for the lighthouse "carrying brown paper parcels . . ." (TL, p. 231). His masculine ethos is associated with brown things, from earth and hedge to books and boats, causing a series of interactions between brown and blue. Lily needs Mrs. Ramsay's spiritual blue frequency, but she also needs Mr. Ramsay's close earthy quality: the question is how to combine these opposites. She switches her attention from Mr. Ramsay in the boat to "the mess of the hedge with its green cave of blues and browns . . ." (TL, p. 234); her brush "flicker[s] brown over the white canvas" (TL, p. 235); "she [begins] precariously dipping among the blues and umbers" (TL, p. 237); then, "moved ... by some instinctive need of distance and blue, she look[s] at the bay beneath her, making hillocks of the blue bars of the waves, and stony fields of the purpler spaces, [and] again she [is] roused . . . by something incongruous. There [is] a brown spot in the middle of the bay. It [is] [Mr. Ramsay's] boat" (TL, p. 270). Itten (AC, p. 136) notes that dark brown and blue juxtaposed "excite" and "awaken" each other, and that "the brown . . . is resurrected by the power of the blue." Mr. Ramsay is certainly resurrected from sterility by his wife's animating energy, which finally sends him on his voyage.

Merging opposite ends of the spectrum produces the color purple, which is therefore a direct sign of integration. According to Rood, "this sensation cannot be produced by one set of waves alone, whatever their length may be; it needs the joint action of the red and violet waves, or the red and blue" (MC, p. 107). Thus spiritual integration cannot be achieved either by Mr. Ramsay's intellect or by Mrs. Ramsay's intuition

working separately; the two extremes must meet in a complete circle, just as masculine and feminine components must mingle in a fully creative (androgynous) self. Indeed, "the spectrum really has no ends . . . for red and violet are *adjacent*, psychologically—their mixture results in purple, which lies outside the spectrum but fills the gap between red and violet in a spectrum which we might imagine bent into a ring."³²

In To the Lighthouse, red (and the energies of fire) becomes constructive only under the aegis of Mrs. Ramsay, who gives the order to "Light the candles'" (TL, p. 145). The "flames [stand] upright," illuminating the microcosmic fruitbowl, and conjuring up a festive image of Bacchus "among the leopard skins and the torches lolloping red and gold" (TL, p. 146). Minta "[wears] her golden haze" (TL, p. 148) and Mr. Ramsay likes such "golden-reddish girls" (TL, p. 149), but Lily feels "scorched" by "the heat of love" in Paul. Mrs. Ramsay, a maternal goddess who has the power to ignite human energies, is "fire-encircled" by her children's laughter. She presides over the "yellow and purple" cornucopia of fruit and the brown-and-yellow dish of meat, bestowing the blessings of sun and fire. She herself is a fountain of energy, "burning and illuminating" (TL, p. 58), as she dispenses heat and light. Her emblem of radiant integration is the ruby that "shines out" (TL, p. 158).

Fire that burns more than it illuminates is destructive, and here such consuming fire is associated with the red light of a dangerous sexual passion. While Lily struggles to harmonize colors in her painting, "suddenly . . . a reddish light seemed to burn in her mind, covering Paul Rayley, issuing from him. It rose like a fire sent up in token of some celebration by savages on a distant beach The whole sea for miles round ran red and gold. Some winey smell mixed with it and intoxicated her" (TL, p. 261). This ritualized, atavistic image of sexuality (burning, drowning, drunkenness) is the negative counterpart of Mrs. Ramsay's civilized fertility rite. Lily is fascinated by the raw force of sexuality—directly expressed to her painter's sensibility as reddish light and crackling fire—yet it seems to threaten not only her psychic balance, but the very fabric of a culture based on sublimation.

The threat is valid aesthetically, as well as psychologically, for "red light, placed against a green surround, would 'flare' over the green and neutralize it" (*CFS*, p. 118). Baudelaire took a perverse "delight in the combination of red and green," which suggested to him "the fusion of violence and peace," and Van Gogh, in his "Night Café," "tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green,"

projecting into this "clash and contrast of the most alien reds and greens" the shock waves of his own psyche (CL, pp. 3, 28). Lily, however, is striving for equilibrium. She needs to deal with the counterforce of the masculine ego, as she needs to balance the colors and masses in her painting. When colors call forth their complementaries, the result may be either conflict or harmony. Itten notes that "two such colors [i.e., pigments] make a strange pair. They are opposite, they require each other. They incite each other to maximum vividness when adjacent; and they annihilate each other, to gray-black, when mixed—like fire and water" (AC, p. 78). When Lily thinks of the Rayleys' marriage, she "squeez[es] the tube of green paint" (TL, p. 257) in an act of self-assertion, then arms herself by "taking the green paint on her brush" (TL, p. 258). It is the dominance of green on her palette that incites the blaze of red in her imagination.

But the tendency of red to annihilate green (or of Rayley or Tansley to destroy Lily's confidence) is countered by the tendency of "a green areola" in vision to surround any "red circle" placed on canvas (LCC, p. 92). Moreover, "Red and Green are of all complementary colours the most equal in depth" (LCC, p. 51), and green is intensified by proximity to red.34 Thus Lily's reflections on her masculine opposites stimulate, rather than inhibit, her color sense and vision. Goethe points out that "single colors affect us, as it were, pathologically. . . . However, the need for totality inherent in our [optical] organ guides us beyond this limitation. It sets itself free by producing the opposites . . . and thus brings about a satisfying completeness."35 The "reddish light" Lily encounters while concentrating on her painting may be seen as a composite of everything outside her normal wavelength, and therefore as antagonistic to the limits of her self. For, "if we isolate one hue from the prismatic spectrum, for example green, and collect the remaining colors ... with a lens, the mixed color obtained will be red, i.e. the complementary color of the green we isolated" (AC, p. 18). In her life, as in her painting, Lily is committed to a search for integration, and thus has to face the opposing self-an interaction that Woolf dramatizes in terms of color.

Cam, in the boat, is associated with green, providing another link with Lily on the lawn. She looks into "green cascades" (TL, p. 246), and green light saturates her mind, as she penetrates the luminous underworld of the unconscious: "Her hand cut a trail in the sea, as her mind made the green swirls and streaks into patterns and, numbed and shrouded, wandered in imagination in that underworld of waters . . . where in the green light a change came over one's entire mind and

one's body shone half transparent in a green cloak" (*TL*, p. 272). This is the underworld of Marvell's oceanic mind that creates other seas, "Annihilating all that's made / To a green thought in a green shade." Cam's enchanting green sea is the imaginative counterpart of the rougher existential seas of Cowper's "Castaway," as recited by her father. The green sea also has "a purplish stain . . . as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath" (*TL*, p. 201). The complementary green and purple, brought together, imply a continuum of experience ranging from ecstasy to suffering, and from creation to destruction.

The color green is also associated tangentially with Mrs. Ramsay, and directly with Lily. Green and blue are frequently juxtaposed, suggesting affinities between aesthetic and spiritual modes of vision. According to Rood, "positive green" is particularly difficult to incorporate into a painting without disrupting the chromatic balance. "The ability to solve this problem in a brilliant manner," says Rood (MC, p. 241), "is one of the signs which indicate an accomplished colourist, and, when the green is combined with blue, the task becomes still more difficult and success more praiseworthy." Cézanne successfully harmonizes blues and greens in such paintings as "The Great Pine" (1892–96) and the lyrical late "Mont Sainte-Victoire" (1904–06), in which "the sky . . . bursts into . . . an explosion of clouds of blue and green, as deep and strong as the blues and greens of the earth. . . ."³⁶ In Lily's painting green and blue are consistently linked (*TL*, pp. 234, 238, 241, 309). As she "[loses] consciousness of outer things . . . her mind [keeps] throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues" (TL, p. 238). The unconscious aim of Lily's art is to strip herself bare and remodel the blank space with the greens and blues of imaginative and spiritual reality. Like Cézanne, she constructs a space in which things exist, through rhythmic alternations of color, and this space is an extension of herself.

"Green is the intermediate between yellow and blue" (AC, p. 136), which clearly reflects Lily's position in the color scale between her fellow artist, Carmichael, and her spiritual mother, Mrs. Ramsay. At the same time, "red, as regards its brilliancy, is midway between yellow and blue; and in green these two extremes are united" (LCC, p. 51). By analogy, Mr. Ramsay's vibrant egotism (red) can be seen as midway between Mr. Carmichael's detached illumination (yellow) and Mrs. Ramsay's spiritual density (blue), while the green paint that Lily squeezes onto her canvas may signify her attempt to combine aesthetic

and spiritual qualities (yellow and blue) in opposition to disturbing passions (red). Lily models the "hideously difficult white space" of her canvas "with greens and blues" (*TL*, p. 238). Her strong impulse toward blue (the color of spiritual distance) is an inner necessity inspired by her craving for Mrs. Ramsay, while her need for aesthetic distance is implied by Carmichael's quiet presence. Placed between the primaries yellow and blue, "green finds no simple complementary color in the spectrum; it requires a mixture of red and violet, or the color called purple" (*MC*, p. 158). Thus Lily's search for integration (green/red; green/purple)³⁷ is matched by her need to join opposite ends of the human spectrum in her painting (red/blue). Her purple plays a key role as the chromatic signifier of integration.

Yellow is the motif of contemplative, catlike Augustus Carmichael, whose "otherwise milk white" beard is stained with a "vivid streak of canary-yellow" (TL, p. 19). His addiction to opium is a token of his rejection of outward reality in favor of an inner sun of mystic/poetic illumination. "In China," observes Itten (AC, p. 17), "yellow, the most luminous color, was reserved to the emperor, the Son of Heaven. None other might wear a yellow garment; yellow was a symbol of supreme wisdom and enlightenment." Mr. Carmichael's poetry is imagined to be oriental and majestic in flavor (TL, pp. 289-90). A venerable figure dressed in yellow slippers (TL, p. 65), he assumes a godlike role as he casts his blessing on the voyage and the vision. Phenomenologically, "yellow is the most light-giving of all hues. . . . Golden yellow suggests the highest sublimination of matter by the power of light, impalpably radiant, lacking transparency, but weightless as a pure vibration" (AC, p. 132). The centrality of Carmichael, his closeness to both earth and sun, sense and spirit, is supported by data of color perception. Birren (CFS, p. 47) notes that "yellow will be seen as the nearest and largest of colors": Augustus, "drinking soup, [is] very large and calm in the failing light, and monumental and contemplative . . ." (TL, p. 145). The passivity of yellow, often used as a luminous background in painting, relates to Carmichael's lethargy; his presence, however, is subliminally helpful to Lily, as she wrestles with her painting on the lawn, and he seems to "[crown] the occasion" with "a wreath of violets and asphodels . . ." (TL, p. 309). Asphodels have "white or yellow flowers like lilies,"38 while the color violet is the complement of greenish-yellow—a mixture of motifs associated with Mrs. Ramsay, Lily, and Carmichael. The fact that "yellow is the lightest and violet the darkest hue" (AC, p. 64) further suggests an aesthetic synthesis.

Yellow and blue-violet (which approximates purple) are also

complementaries-that is, combined they produce white light. Mr. Carmichael and Mrs. Ramsay are united by "looking together" at the "yellow and purple dish of fruit" (TL, p. 146), whose pyramidal structure recalls Cézanne's still lifes. Their unity once more signifies integration of aesthetic and spiritual modes of vision. "Her eyes had been going in and out among the curves and shadows of the fruit, among the rich purples of the lowland grapes ... putting a yellow against a purple, a curved shape against a round shape, without knowing why she did it, or why, every time she did it, she felt more and more serene ..." (TL, p. 163). Aesthetic bliss here has a basis in the science of optics, for visual purple and visual yellow are mutually transforming agents: "[The] purplish pigment in the rods of the retina, bleached to visual yellow by the action of light [is] considered a factor in transforming light rays into the sensory impulses of vision ..." (WNWD). Thus Mrs. Ramsay's intuitive combination of colors exactly renders the physical basis of spiritual vision.

In the geometry of the Color Circle (AC, p. 64), the yellow/violet axis (with its "light-dark contrast") stands at right angles to the green-blue/red-orange axis (with its "cold-warm contrast"). Similarly, in the color geometry of "The Lighthouse," aesthetic and emotional axes are based on similar color contrasts—yellow/violet: the glow of Carmichael/the shadow of Mrs. Ramsay's spirit; red/green: the passionate warmth of Mr. Ramsay, Tansley, Rayley/the coolness of Cam and Lily. The formal geometry of Part Three creates a continual oscillation between the predominantly aesthetic and psychological spheres of lawn and boat, until, with a single stroke of her brush, Lily resolves the opposition into harmony.

Allen McLaurin's discussion of yellow focuses some of the problems of dealing with color in literature. McLaurin (EE, p. 194) says that "in her use of yellow . . . Woolf is trying to come close to the 'pure' colour of a painting—colour without any literary meaning." Yet when he adds that "yellow is a positive avoidance of logical meaning," and that the quality of autonomy "rubs off on to the colour" from Carmichael, he comes perilously close to assigning negative meanings. At the same time, McLaurin cites G. E. Moore in support of his contention that "yellow means simply yellow . . . [and] cannot be translated into other terms." The critical difficulty of distinguishing between plastic and symbolic values in the novel may be a sign of Woolf's success. In transposing color into words, 39 she exploits a field of subtle interrelations between sensation and idea.

As Itten (AC, p. 36) notes, "our sense organs can function only by

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means of comparisons.... Color effects are ... intensified or weakened by contrast." For Van Gogh, "there is no blue without yellow and without orange" (CL, pp. 3, 491) while Badt (C, pp. 37–38) claims that "every touch of paint" that Cézanne laid on his canvas was aimed at "intensification of the relationships within the picture." Especially relevant is Rudolf Arnheim's observation (AVP, p. 62) that "the identity of a color does not reside in the color itself but is established by relation. We are aware of this mutual transfiguration, which makes every color dependent on the support of all the others, just as the stones of an arch hold one another in place." This is exactly the kind of construction with color that Lily practices in her painting, and that Woolf attempts to match in To the Lighthouse.

In tracing Woolf's use of the four visual primaries, blue, red, green, and yellow, I have, in each case, discovered patterns of reaction and integration that function aesthetically as well as psychologically. Instead of being tied to fixed symbolic meanings, Woolf's colors vibrate together, causing dramatic tension before achieving what Fry calls "a harmonious plastic unity." McLaurin (EE, pp. 73, 80) suggests that "some sort of keyboard of colours can be constructed, some 'system of relations' as in Cézanne's art," and that "language might be able to create a relation similar to that established by colours in a painting." The sense of interaction is particularly significant in literature, where direct effects of light and color on the retina must be replaced by imagined responses. In To the Lighthouse, each character has, as it were, its own frequency, and is known by its own range of color associations. Moreover, each character modifies and is modified by a complex "system of relations"-involving virtual color, mass, and line-that helps to unify the novel as "a psychological poem" (AWD, p. 104) and as a self-reflexive work of art. The language of color is integral to Woolf's vision and design, as she explores the interface between fiction and painting. Only through color interactions-complementing, but transcending, psychological relationships—can Woolf's reader pass beyond printed words and experience that "luminous silent stasis," in which aesthetic contemplation and human understanding become one.

¹ Virginia Woolf, "Walter Sickert," *Collected Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), II, 241; my italics. Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition.

² Jeanne Schulkind, ed., *Moments of Being* (London: Hogarth Press, 1978),

³ Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927; rpt. New York: Harcourt, n.d.). Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition, abbreviated as *TL*.

⁴ See Johannes Itten, The Art of Color, trans. Ernst van Haagen (New York: Van Nostrand, n.d.), p. 13: "Color is life.... Colors are primordial ideas, children of the aboriginal colorless light and its counterpart, colorless darkness. As flame begets light, so light engenders colors. Colors are the children of light, and light is their mother." Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition, abbreviated as AC.

⁵ Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry: A Biography (1940; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1979), p. 225. Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition, abbreviated as RF. Fry adapts the notion of "psychological volumes" from Charles Mauron, The Nature of Beauty in Art and Literature, trans. Roger Fry (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), pp. 66-67. Fry's "Plastic Colour," Transformations (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926), pp. 213-24, and Cézanne: A Study of His Development (1927; rpt. New York: Noonday Press, 1958) are contemporaneous with To the Lighthouse (1927).

⁶ Woolf, "Modern Fiction," Collected Essays, pp. 2, 106.

⁷ Vincent Van Gogh, *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, 2nd ed. (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1978), pp. 3, 25. Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition, abbreviated as CL.

8 Kurt Badt, The Art of Cézanne, trans. Sheila Ann Ogilvie (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1965), p. 49. Subsequent references in my text are based on

this edition, abbreviated as C.

⁹ See David Daiches, Virginia Woolf, rev. ed. (New York: New Directions, 1963), pp. 87-88. Allen McLaurin, Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 193-94, notes that "the use of colour becomes less 'literary' in the traditional way" (than Daiches recognizes). "Colour," he writes, "is used to convey something which can be described vaguely as an emotional equivalence, a subtle reaction which is not logical." Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition, abbreviated as EE.

¹⁰ Hubert Wellington, ed., *The Journal of Eugène Delacroix*, trans. Lucy Norton (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980), p. 200.

11 Fry, Cézanne, p. 77, finds color, as well as form, to be "geometric," and in "Plastic Colour," Transformations, p. 220, he defines "the central idea of Cézanne's later work" as "the construction of clearly articulated plastic wholes by means of the interplay of coloured planes. . . .'

12 Quoted in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," Sense and Non-Sense, trans. Hubert L. and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p. 15. Subsequent references in my text are based on this

edition.

13 M. E. Chevreul, The Laws of Contrast of Colour, trans. John Spanton, new ed. (London: Routledge, 1868), p. 2. Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition, abbreviated as LCC.

14 See my article, "Light in To the Lighthouse," Twentieth Century Literature, 23

(1977), 377-89.

15 Ogden Rood, Modern Chromatics, ed. Faber Birren (New York: Van Nostrand, 1973), p. 104. Subsequent references in my text are based on this

edition, abbreviated as MC.

16 Maurice Denis, "Cézanne—II," trans. Roger Fry, Burlington Magazine, 16, No. 83 (1910), 279. See also Denis, "Cézanne-I," trans. Fry, Burlington Magazine, 16, No. 82 (1910), 207-19. This two-part essay is a vital source for the

evolution of Fry's views on Cézanne. Subsequent references in my text are abbreviated as D.

¹⁷ Ewald Hering, cited in Itten, The Art of Color, p. 21.

¹⁸ See Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), p. 72: "The thing about Proust is his combination of the utmost sensibility with the utmost tenacity. He searches out these butterfly shades to the last grain. He is as tough as catgut and as evanescent as a butterfly's bloom." Subsequent reference in my text is based on this edition, abbreviated as AWD.

¹⁹ Van Gogh, Letters, pp. 2, 428. Cf. Wellington, ed., The Journal of Eugene

Delacroix, p. 151: "... colour gives the semblance of life."

²⁰ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), pp. 158–59, 160. Fry, *Transformations*, p. 216, observes: "There is almost inevitably a conflict between the decorative and plastic uses of colour. It is yet another aspect of the incessant tension between the organisation of a picture upon the surface and its organisation in space."

²¹ Virginia Woolf, A Haunted House and Other Stories (London: Hogarth

Press, 1967), pp. 13, 24.

²² William Gaunt, The Impressionists (London: Thames and Hudson,

1970), p. 19.

- ²³ Quoted in Badt, *The Art of Cézanne*, p. 57. According to Badt (p. 72), the impressionists "succeeded in fusing their pictures into unity in a blue-hued space," but he contrasts their atmospheric blue with Cézanne's compositional use of the color.
- ²⁴ Faber Birren, *Color, Form, and Space* (New York: Reinhold, 1961), p. 96. Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition, abbreviated as *CFS*.

²⁵ Egbert Jacobson, Basic Color (Chicago: Theobald, 1948), p. 117.

²⁶ J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. Jack Sage (New York: Philo-

sophical Library, 1962), pp. 51-52.

²⁷ See Rudolf Arnheim, "Perceptual Analysis of a Symbol of Interaction," *Toward a Psychology of Art* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), pp. 222–44.

²⁸ Faber, Birren, Creative Color (New York: Reinhold, 1961), p. 52.

²⁹ Experiments in color fusion show how purple light can be generated from red and blue: "If a red card is exposed to one eye and a blue card to the other eye (simultaneously), perfect fusion in the center of the brain will result in a mixture of the two (a purple)" (Birren, Color, Form, and Space, p. 44).

³⁰ According to Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1912), trans. Michael Sadleir et al. (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1947), p. 45, chromotherapy has shown that "red light stimulates and excites the heart, while

blue light can cause temporary paralysis."

³¹ L. Moholy-Nagy, Vision in Motion (New York: Theobald, 1961), p. 155. ³² Gordon Lynn Walls, The Vertebrate Eye (1942), quoted in Jacobson, Basic

Color, p. 116.

³³ Alison Fairlie, "Aspects of Expression in Baudelaire's Art Criticism," in Ulrich Finke, ed., French Nineteenth Century Painting and Literature (New York: Harper, 1972), p. 51.

³⁴ Jean Sutter, ed., *The Neo Impressionists*, trans. Chantal Deliss (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1970), p. 29, offers the following succinct

definitions of Chevreul's Laws: "Simultaneous contrast means that two colourareas placed side by side will tend to exaggerate their differences, and, if complementaries, they will acquire an unusual brilliance.... Successive contrast means that one colour-area will fatigue the eye after a moment and induce an after-image or surrounding halo of the colour-opposite."

³⁵ Quoted in Rudolf Arnheim, "Color," Art and Visual Perception, New Version (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 362. Subsequent re-

ference in my text is based on this edition, abbreviated as AVP.

36 Meyer Schapiro, Paul Cézanne (New York: Abrams, n.d.), p. 124.

³⁷ Purple and green are sometimes juxtaposed (*TL*, pp. 33, 286) as, implicitly, in Lily's vision of Mrs. Ramsay "stepping . . . across fields among whose folds, purplish and soft, among whose flowers, hyacinths or lilies, she vanished" (*TL*, p. 270). (Here the purple of integration merges with the green-and-white of Lily's emblematic flower.)

38 Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition (New York: World, 1957).

(Subsequently referred to in my text as WNWD.)

³⁹ Cf. Denis, "Cézanne—II," p. 275: "Every work of art is a transposition, an emotional equivalent . . . Cézanne taught us to transpose the data of sensation into the elements of a work of art." Woolf had to adapt this lesson to fiction, taking valuable hints from Cézanne and Fry, as well as from Proust.





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